THE WEB
MAGAZIN

August 1997

What's On + Where to Go

500 SITES REVIEWED

ULTIMATE WEB GUIDE

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MUSIC • FILM
TRAVEL
MONEY
TV



Exclusive Interview

BARRY BONDS

MAJOR LEAGUE WEB GEEK

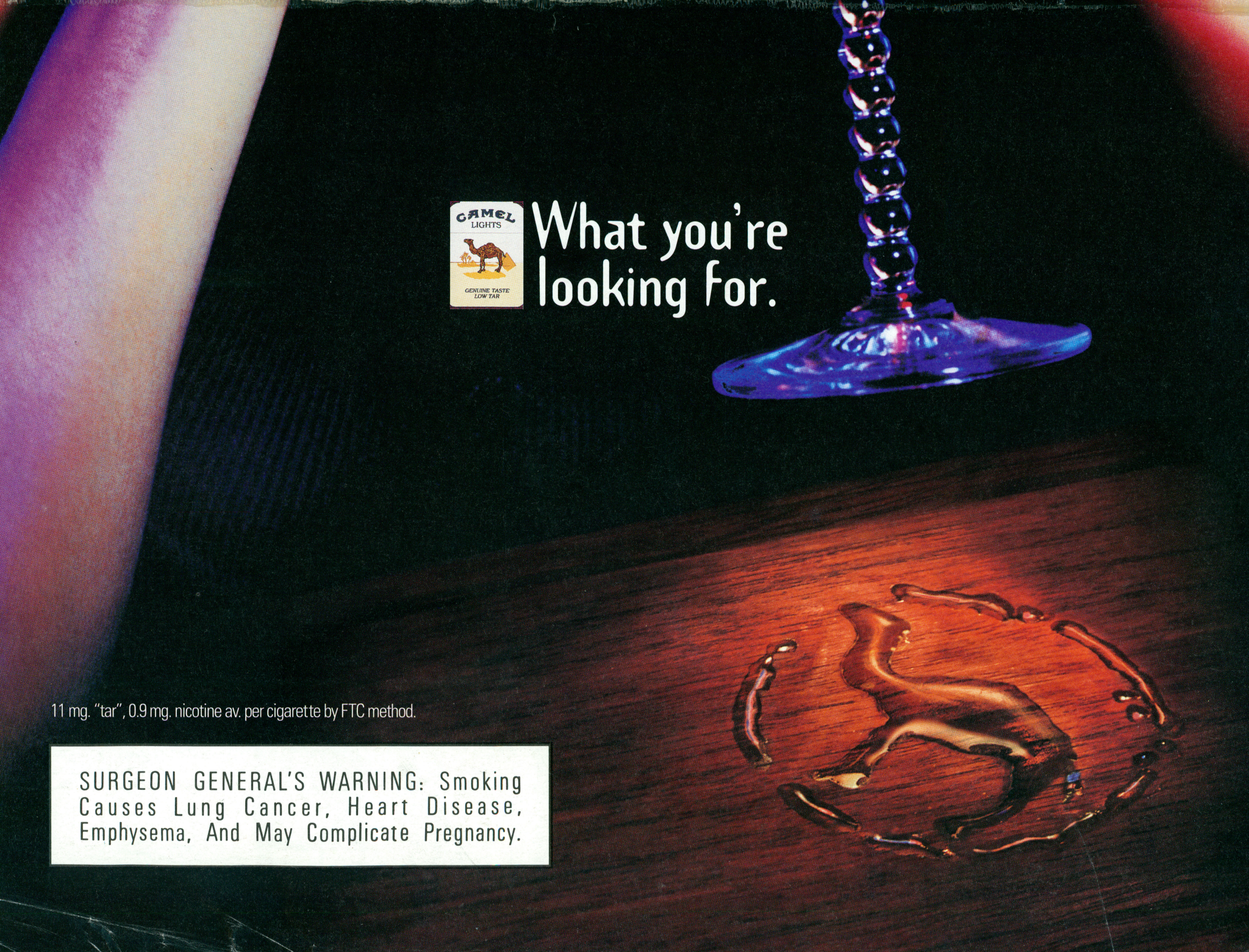
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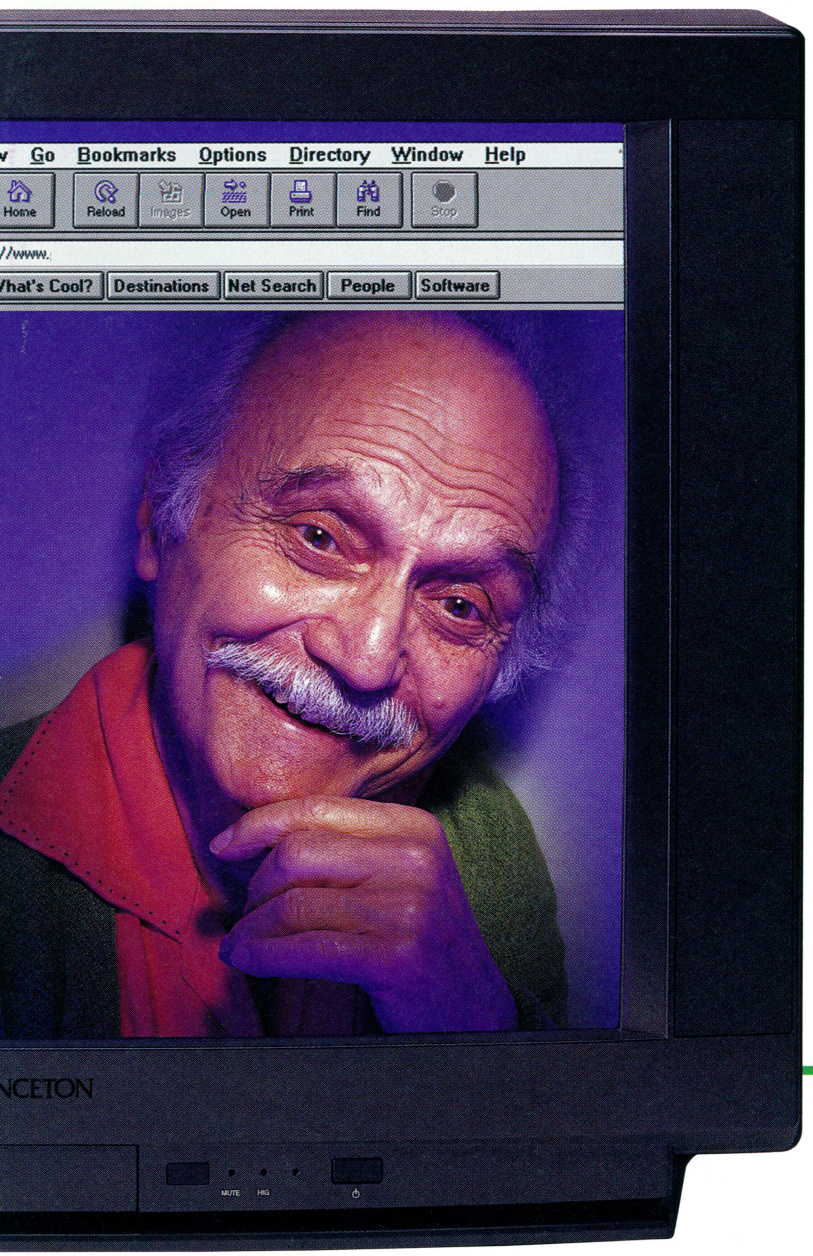




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ITS FATHER WAS A MONITOR.





the monitor

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BY MARK KREIDLER

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BY BOB IVRY

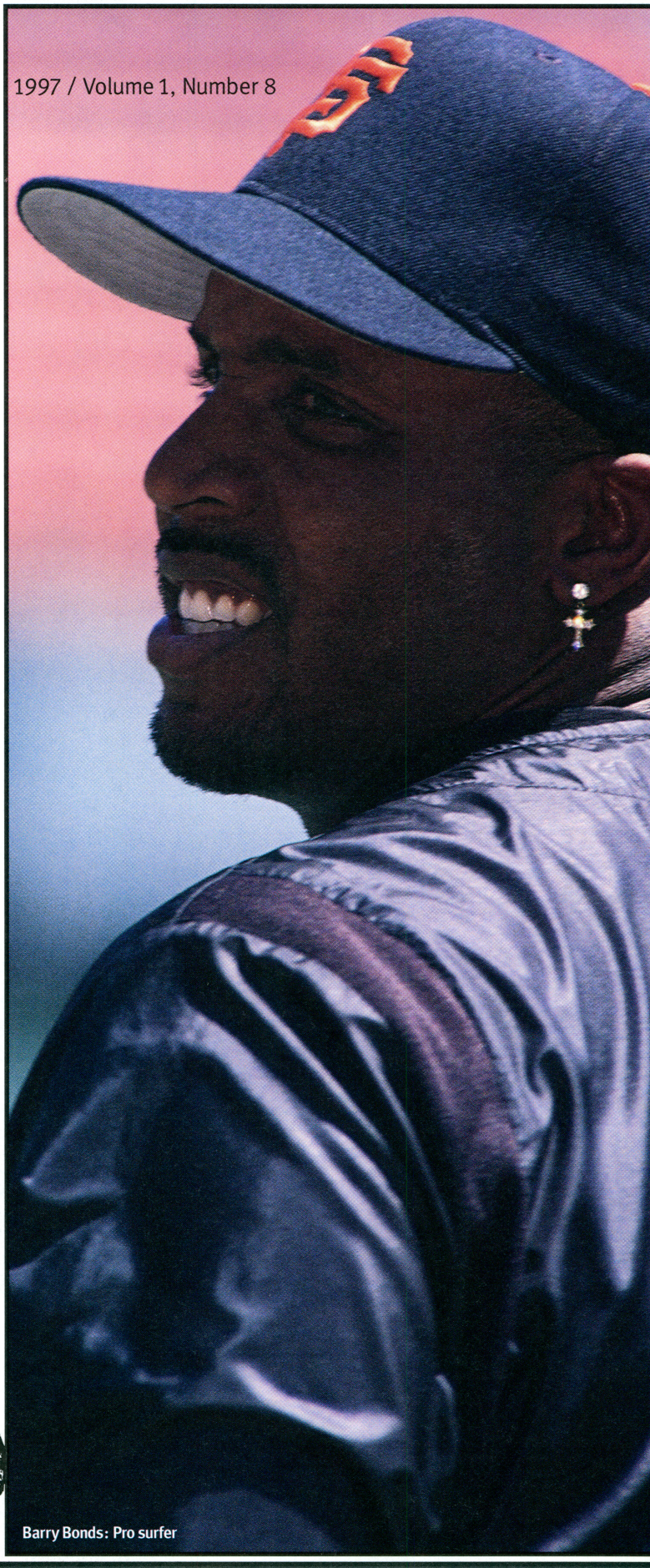
HBO takes a Web-savvy approach to testing what viewers want. New shows get a tryout in cyberspace before they hit the tube.

30 THE 20 MOST ANNOYING THINGS ABOUT THE WEB

BY MARY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

The honeymoon's over. The Web—or at least, certain people, places, and things on it—have gotten familiar enough to be *really* irritating. Herewith, our top 20 Net peeves.





Barry Bonds: Pro surfer

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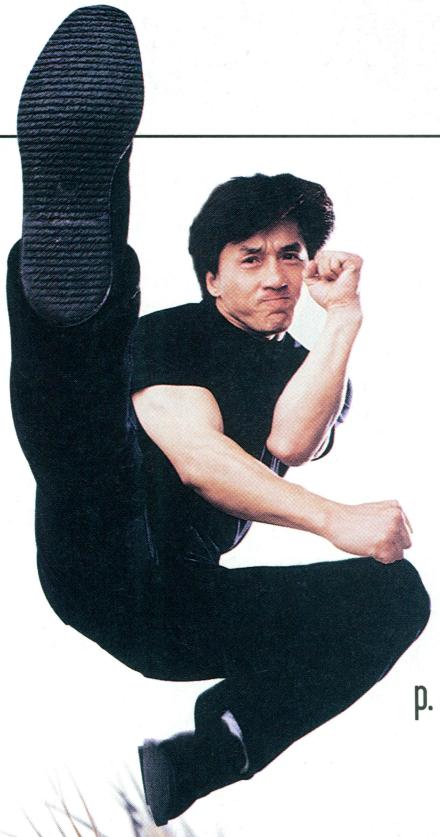
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Don't Type Those URLs! Our Site Links to Them All

To reach the Web sites you find in Views & Reviews, you don't have to type every single URL into your browser. Just type one—www.webmagazine.com—to reach THE WEB Online. There, you'll find all the sites we've reviewed in this and past issues, complete with live links that take you straight to the site of your choice.

HOMEPAGE | BY STEVE FOX

The Anointed, the Anonymous, the Annoying

BARRY BONDS ISN'T LIKE YOU AND ME. For one thing, he's a professional baseball player, one of the best of his generation. And he's rich. Very, very, very rich. But he does share one habit with the readers of this magazine: He loves the Internet. And he loves to talk about it.

Baseball fans, accustomed to reading about a surly, arrogant Bonds—a private man who often snarls at sports reporters and typically limits his interviews to a few well-chosen words—may be surprised at just how forthcoming he was with *Sacramento Bee* and ESPNET columnist Mark Kreidler ("Barry Bonds Supergeek," page 22). "I was as shocked as anyone when he agreed to the interview almost immediately," admits Kreidler. "Maybe it's because he's such an avid Web user and this was a new venue, an opportunity for people to view him as more than just a ballplayer."


Mark Kreidler

As it turns out, Bonds is much more than just a world-class athlete. He's a budding venture capitalist who logs on to the Internet daily to get the info he needs to make his business decisions. "In the case of computers and technology, Bonds feels like he's playing catch-up, and he's obsessed with learning more and doing more," explains Kreidler. Bonds' infatuation isn't entirely surprising. "Baseball is a constant source of passion to Bonds because it's so changeable. Pitchers change all the time, for instance. It's the same with the Net, so he's constantly relearning, adjusting to the changes."

As a Bay Area sportswriter, Kreidler has been coaxing traditional baseball quotes from Bonds for years. This time was different. "Five minutes into the interview, it was like he flicked a switch," says Kreidler. The professional jock suddenly became the techno-geek, sharing high-tech stock tips, waxing enthusiastic about his project to put technology into the hands of inner-city kids, and bubbling over about his wired-for-the-future home. "Bonds is very proud of his house," says Kreidler, "It's more technologically advanced even than those of his Silicon Valley neighbors. And Bonds is very competitive. He burns white hot. It's his makeup, whether in baseball or in venture capital."

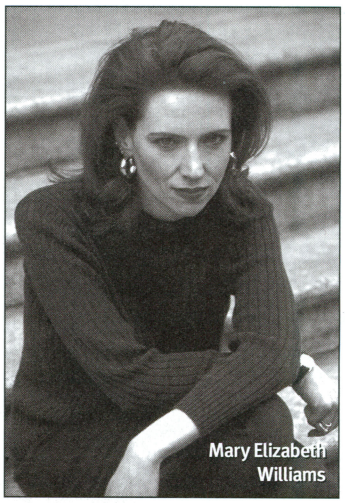
LATE NIGHT IN THE CITY

For the not-quite-white-hot enthusiast who prefers more laid-back entertainment, HBO—the cable TV network—has a lower-key sporting option. Called III:am, it's a Web "show" for nightcrawlers, capturing the escapades of New York City's wee-hours set. And if III:am continues to draw fans online, sometime next year it's likely to make history as the first Web site to become a television show ("From Net to Set," page 26). It's not that the suits at HBO are a bunch of wild-eyed Web fanatics; but producing a television pilot is expensive, whereas screen-testing a show on the Web isn't. Do the computer monitor and the TV set have the same audience? "The online audience will only grow. In the meantime, the more interesting, curious, and intelligent people are online today," says author Bob Ivry. (Thanks Bob, you can write for us any time.)

Ivry notes that the HBO Online people were remarkably cooperative. "They want to get the word out. In many ways, they're just getting started on the Web, and they recognize they're not quite ready to be equal partners with the TV part of the company. Still, their attitude is good, and they're thinking big."

An entertainment reporter with the *Bergen Record* in Hackensack, N.J., Ivry also tracked down the not-yet-famous creators of other online HBO shows and learned that they, too, hope to ride the Web-to-TV tide. "As the technology improves," Ivry predicts, "and the Web as a medium gets closer to broadcast TV, we'll see more Web shows becoming TV shows. Already shows like III:am have video clips. What's impossible today is habitual tomorrow."

Regular Web surfers are probably more concerned, however, with what's habitual *today*, especially since some of the stuff online is, well, downright annoying. Snail-slow pages, intrusive ads, big attitude, broken links. Sure we love much of what we find, but we'd like to shriek about the rest. And we have, in "The 20 Most Annoying Things About the Web" (page 30). Mary Elizabeth Williams, who examined urban legends in our April issue, had only one complaint about her assignment: "How am I supposed to hold it to 20?" The solution, she assured us, was to turn the problem over to scientists at the Center for Advanced Webology.


Mary Elizabeth Williams

Who? we asked. Never breaking a smile, she informed us that the center's researchers—who coincidentally hail from her hometown of Hoboken, N.J.—had achieved notoriety in scientific circles for their revolutionary formulation of the still-controversial Relevance to Kevin Bacon Factor. "They're the best," she assured us.

"I had daily contact with the folks at the center," Williams insists. "Of course, they're scientists with little real-world experience. So they came up with a great list of irritants, but I had to suggest all the remedies." And what words of wisdom can Williams offer the peeved Web surfer? "Please, make sure you don't become an annoyance yourself. If you find yourself wanting to compile and post the funniest bits from every Monty Python sketch you've ever seen, turn off your computer. Unplug your phone, man."

Good advice. We think we'll take it.

***Steve Fox** is editor-in-chief of* THE WEB Magazine.



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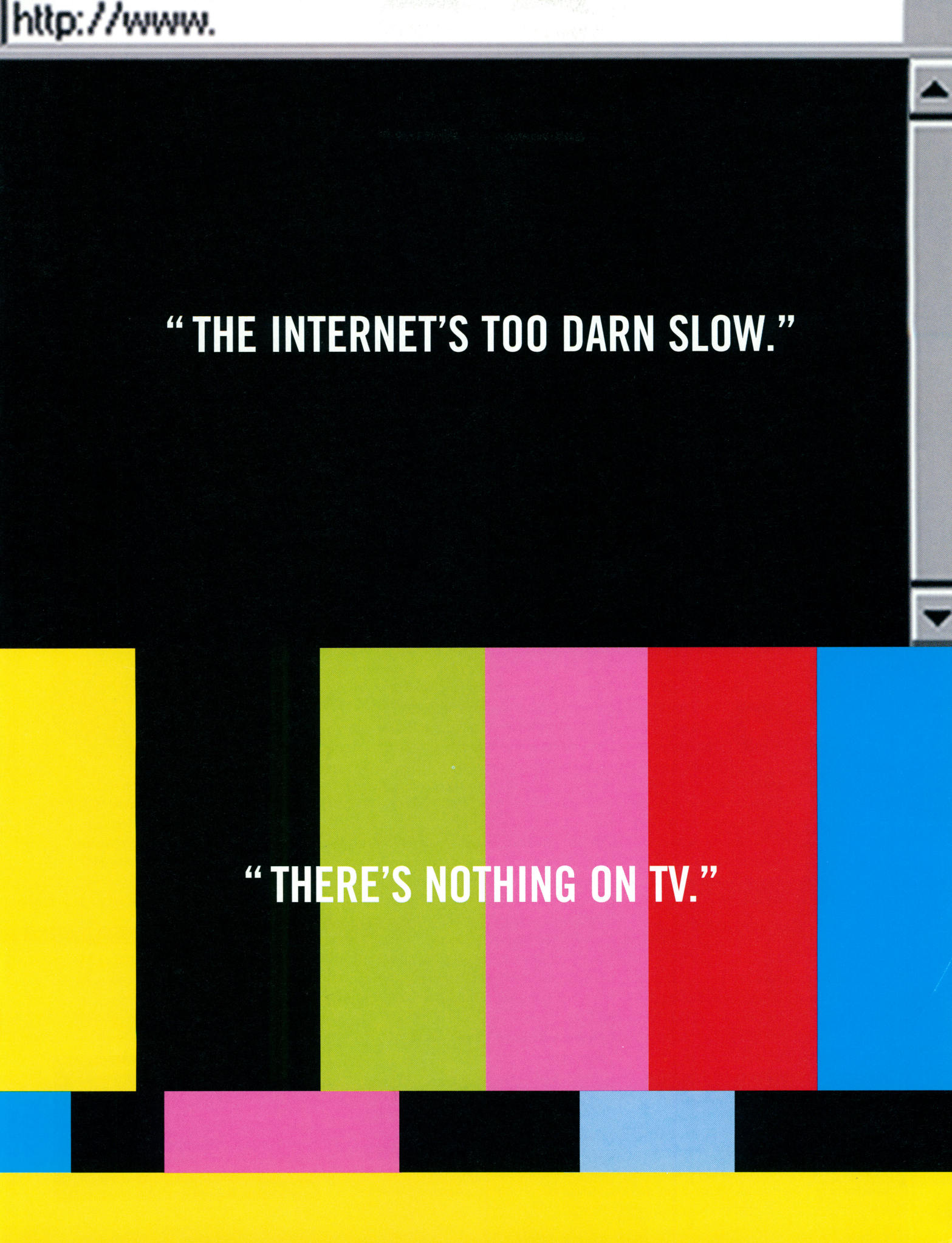
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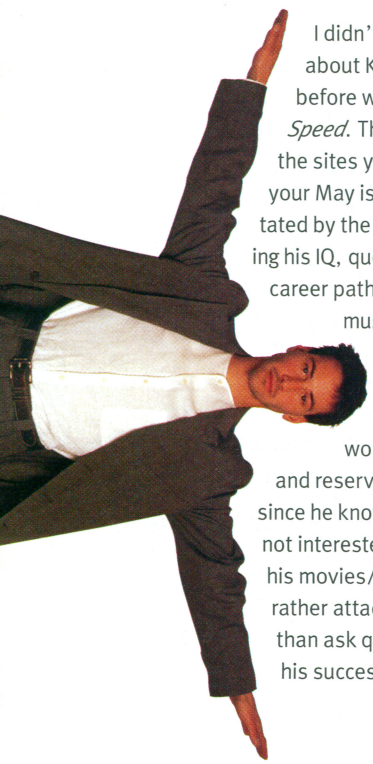
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POSTINGS | FEEDBACK FROM READERS

I WAS DISAPPOINTED in writer Ted Casablanca's choice of a "filet mignon" Gillian Anderson site in the TV/Radio section of the May issue. As Anderson sites go, Daniel Burman's (www.geocities.com/Broadway/1424/gillian.html) is far from the best. It only features the FAQ and basic background information on the actress. If you're looking for Gillian Anderson sites worth printing in your magazine, permit me to suggest a few: Mulder, It's Me (home.interstat.net/~tomveil/gillian.html); The Gillian Anderson Web Site (www.ao.net/~gaws); The Gillian Anderson British Association (www.hawksand.co.uk/gaba/gaba.html); and Scully? (www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/1055).

Jack Witzig, via e-mail



I didn't know much about Keanu Reeves before watching the movie *Speed*. Then I checked out the sites you suggested in your May issue. I was devastated by the comments attacking his IQ, questioning his career paths, his love for music, his lack of public relations, and his sexual preference! No wonder he's quiet and reserved. He's smart since he knows the media are not interested in promoting his movies/music; they'd rather attack his private life than ask questions about his success.

Emily Hamilton
via e-mail

"The Web may not have improved sports radio, but it hasn't hurt it either," says Richard Overton [Sports, June]. Overton, according to his article, listened to the station for less than an hour and then "tested" the on-air hosts' knowledge of geography, not real sports. At least grant us the professional courtesy of a proper listening before coming to such a conclusion. "Hard Drive" is a one-of-a-kind show of sports, comedy, music, and irreverent commentary. After you listen, you can evaluate whether or not SportsLine USA has done anything to improve sports radio. When we invited Overton to defend his conclusion, he declined. Now we invite *THE WEB* to come to SportsLine USA's studios so you can be more responsible the next time you write about online radio.

Scott Kaplan, skaplan@sportsline.com
CBS SportsLine (www.sportsline.com)

Actually, Overton listened to Hard Drive for several hours, though his piece specifies only the 40 minutes it took for his e-mail question to be answered on air and the 5-minute turnaround for a clarification to be broadcast. The hosts' fuzziness about heartland geography was incidental to the article; the main points Overton "tested for" and reported on were the timeframe for audience participation and the tenor of the sports coverage at Hard Drive. In fact, his appraisal of online sports was generally favorable.

Two months ago the librarian at our school said she had come across a cool magazine called *THE WEB*. She brings it in and I can't put the sucker down. I run out and get my own copy, show it to another teacher on staff, and the next thing you know, 25% of our teachers have bought the April and May issues, and everyone is champing at the bit for June. Staff room discussions constantly focus on *THE WEB*. Nowhere does it state that this is addictive and may be dangerous to your health. Your magazine should have a warning!

Ingram, ingram@tc.globalnet.com.tw
Lincoln American School, Taichung, Taiwan

Why can't magazines cover more education-oriented material? A growing number of schools are going online and the education market is virtually untapped. School systems are spending billions of dollars annually in technology—specifically, Internet technology. You could be one of the first publications to include a section geared toward the education market—why not?

J. T. Lawson, jtlawson@access.k12.wv.us

So what's our Home/Education section? Chopped liver?

I like the layout of *THE WEB Magazine*. I have two complaints, however. First, you stopped listing "Top of the Web." I miss this feature and think you should continue with a "best of" each month besides "The Bookmark." My second complaint: With thousands of Web sites out there, it shouldn't be hard to find and review 500 NEW sites each month.

Peter Ramos, via e-mail

Yes, "Top of the Web" is gone; we wanted to avoid "best-of" glut after adding our monthly Bookmark of essential sites. We do repeat some interesting sites from the month before, so new readers won't miss out, but we never run reviews for longer than two months. If you can't wait for fresh reviews, head to the What's New section of THE WEB Online (www.webmagazine.com) for the lowdown on the very latest sites.

I recently noticed that two sites have begun doling out awards entitled "The Bottom 95 Percent of the Web." One of these seems to have been created by Dartmouth students (www.dartmouth.edu/~jaundice/bottom95), and the other comes from Pointless Communications (www.silcom.com/~tonkin/pointless). I wonder if perchance they are related?

Gil Bates, San Francisco



That's the most ridiculous assertion we've ever heard. You're obviously a stooge hired by *THE WEB Magazine* to draw readers' attention to sites—like ours (www.webmagazine.com)—that critique other sites for the public good. We'll have none of it, sir.

URL UPDATE

At press time, WildFeed, www.wildfeedtv.net ("America's Most Subversive Outtakes," Forward Slash, July), was no longer online.

The correct address for CHiPs Online (TV/Radio, June) is www.adequate.com/CHiPs. ■

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FORWARD SLASH

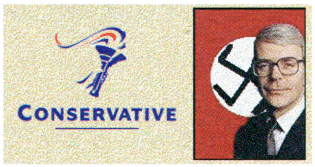
Bits from the Net | by Gil **Bates**

HACK THE VOTE...



Politics and the Web seem to go hand-in-hand... especially in Great Britain, where the recent election was colored by Webby goings-on. Both major political parties—Labour and the Conservatives—had their Web sites in full swing for the proceedings. And both sites were hacked during the run-up to the election. Labour's supporters got the first shock, when they logged on to find a buffoonish caricature of candidate Tony Blair and a decidedly unflattering party slogan. But Labour got the last laugh. Just days before the election, the Conservative Party's Web site was hacked to show a doctored photo of then–Prime Minister John Major posing in front of a Nazi flag. The Net result? Blair and company won in a landslide.

Meanwhile, across the Channel, the Web managed to infuriate French politicos preparing for their own election. In the land of the baguette, a 20-year-old law prohibits publication of political polls during the week before elections. And the threat of a 500,000-franc ($88,000) fine has always made compliance a snap. But during the week of May 25 to June 1, any citizen with a browser could get his fill of forbidden opinions, courtesy of various Swiss and British newspapers, which published French election polls on their sites. Rumored to have originated from secret surveys made by the political intelligence unit of the French police, these polls were a huge hit with Internet users in France. Gee, just when you thought it was safe to hold an election...

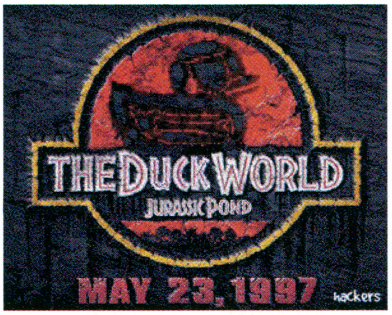


...AND HACK THE DINOSAUR

Shortly before this summer's release of Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* sequel, *The Lost World*, some hot news burned up the wire: Someone had hacked the movie's promotional site, www.lost-world.com. Two online news organizations (CNN and news.com) posted the news of the benign hack, which substituted a cutesy picture of a duck for the movie's real dinosaur skeleton logo and renamed the flick The Duck World, Jurassic Pond.

But within 24 hours, a different story was circulating—that the whole hack story was a gimmick designed to squeeze a little more media attention out of an already saturated promotional campaign. The first Web site to call the hoax was Beta (www.commadot.com/beta), which noted that the Duck World graphic—a professionally rendered, fully functioning image map—was time-stamped two days earlier than the site's genuine Lost World image." The fact is," read the Beta story, "this was a publicity stunt and it's pathetic." The following day, perhaps leery of inviting a libel suit, the Beta site toned down its original message.

So was the hack real subversion or a devious technique intended to hype a massively expensive sequel into a ker-chinging celluloid cash register? We'll probably never know. But when a hack with no critical edge serves only to publicize an already overpublicized site, you have to wonder.



WOULD IT FIND *KATZ*?

Winner of this month's Truth in Advertising award goes to Excite for its "Lay Miserabble" banner ads (as seen on such sites as CINET and HotWired). These ads proclaimed "Even if you can't pronounce it, we can find it." Fair enough, but *Les Miserables* wasn't playing at any of the 236,149 sites Excite returned. The closest we came to a smash-hit musical in the first couple of hundred answers was the lyrics to Bob Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay." And as His Bobness so eloquently put it "No, no, no, it ain't me, babe. It ain't me you're lookin' for, babe." Thanks, Bob... we'll keep looking elsewhere.

DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD

It pains us to report on a site featuring a piñata named after a certain contributing editor to THE WEB Magazine. *The Webmistress at GeekChic (www.geekchic.com/billheds.htm) insists that any similarity between her Gil Bates Piñata and any person living or dead is entirely coincidental. Still, sentiments like "Think of the fun you'll have bashing it in! Beating its brains out!" don't exactly inspire confidence.*



WE DIDN'T REALIZE IT WAS FOR SALE

As of June 1, the Internet belonged to Alan M. Meckler. At least, the domain internet.com became the property of his print and Web publishing company, Mecklermedia Corporation, on that date. To commemorate the event, Mecklermedia is dubbing itself "The Internet Media Company." Just one question, Mr. Landlord: How do we get hold of you when something breaks?

The Online Curmudgeon



by Hector Snipes

"The Voice You Can Trust"

It's bad enough that hack writers from *U.S. News and World Report* and *Fortune* magazine call us mavens of the Web such demeaning terms as mouse potatoes and Web potatoes. But flipping through back issues of *Business Week* yesterday, I saw the insult that pushed me over the edge. The article described a NetPC as "a Web-surfing box for peanuts." Enough's enough. We're not vegetables, we're human beings, and we won't stand for it anymore!

★

In the May issue, I reported on a series of appalling typographical errors in MCI's television advertising—the random punctuation :-) following the phrase "Is this a great time or what?" Well, imagine my shock at receiving more than a dozen e-mails of support... for MCI! Even worse, these e-mailers haven't bothered to proofread their letters to me. I found numerous instances of the seemingly popular typo :-) and the slight variant ;-), while several messages featured cryptic letters in angle brackets, such as ‹g› and ‹roflmao›. I despair of the education system.

★

AOL may be buying CompuServe? I could hardly believe the news reports "from sources close to the company." Not surprisingly the monopoly watchers in the U.S. government are looking closely. But I'll bet the folks in the influential Munich prosecutor's lobby are celebrating. Imagine... only one organization to sue for distributing smut in the Fatherland!

• • •

***Hector Snipes** is executive vice president of Marketing for X-Industries. You can reach him at VVQJ65B@prodigy.com.*

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www.shreddedheart.com/petsites/bonnie.htm

FIRSTBORN OF THE GODDESS
bungalow.com/firstborn.html

JUDGE MATTHEW BAILLIE BEGBIE: FIRST AMONG MEN
www.cariboo-net.com/sentinel/vol4/first.htm

FIRSTHAND COMMUNIQUÉS
www.pslgroup.com/FIRSTHND.HTM

THE FIRST MUSEUM OF CYBERSPACE
www.muscyberspace.com



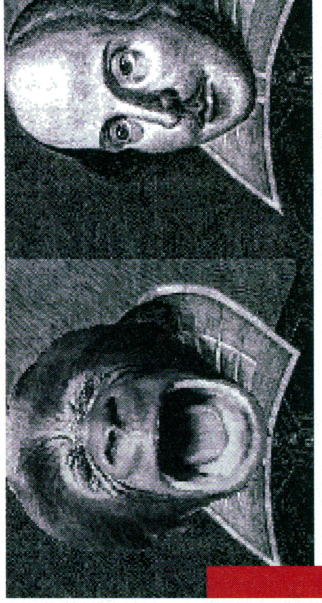
CUD "COMPUTER UNDERGROUND E-PUBS—PHIRST AMENDMENT" ARCHIVE
www.eff.org/pub/Publications/CuD/Phirst_Amendment

WALTER B. FERST
www.mesirov.com/wferst.htm

FURST AND FURST
www.furstandfurst.com

FERSTER INTERNATIONAL
www.t-mark.com/ferster/ferster.html

MY FIRSTEST HOMEY PAGE IN THE WORLD (WIDE WEB)
attila.stevens-tech.edu/~vmehta



2 B R NOT 2 B D@ IS D ?

An oft-cited illustration of open-ended probability asserts that a monkey placed in a room with a typewriter will eventually, just by luck of the draw, produce the works of Shakespeare. Lee E. J. Arnould's monkey—a program "written to create a virtual monkey hitting a keyboard of lower case letters"—is less ambitious: Its goal is to crank out the phrase "to be or not to be that is the question." When last we checked in at bronte.cs.utas.edu.au/monkey, the plucky cybersimian's best effort, after nearly a year, was 12 letters correct out of 40. But the monkey shouldn't feel discouraged: Shakespeare didn't finish his first play until he was thirty.

THE AWARD AWARD

Critiquing the Web, one site at a time, is a cross to bear. A golden cross, in this case. At least that's what the Web Consultant (www.web-consult.com/awards) hands out to the lucky Webutantes whose work meets his stringent criteria. And what are those criteria? They include "Some what good content. No Abscene images or adult images." We assume proper spelling is not a prerequisite for winning.



WHAT IS THE SOUND OF ONE HAND TYPING?



"I worry that computers are putting a serious crimp in our sexual practices. I picture a whole nation of people typing with one hand. And not only is it obscene, it's hard to read! I mean, 'Fick me, fick me'? 'Show me your tots'?"

—BETTE MIDLER, AS WIDELY REPORTED IN CHAT CHANNELS AND IN E-MAIL HUMOR CHAINS

SHOOTING STAR ARCHIVES



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YEAH, BUT OPEN-SORES.COM IS STILL AVAILABLE

We at *THE WEB Magazine* are always on the lookout for weird and wonderful domain names, and Procter & Gamble has never disappointed. In past issues, we've alerted you to such alluring titles as diarrhea.com, pimples.com, and the gloriously misspelled deoderant.com.

But the latest entry seemed too bad to be true: Had the corporation behind Noxzema really registered crotch-rot.com? When we searched the domain name database at InterNIC (where such items are registered), there it was, plain as day, registered to our friends at P&G. But InterNIC has placed the domain on hold pending an investigation. Turns out the registrars never got confirmation from Arnold B. Crotchrot of 123 Genitalia Way, Portland, Oregon—the technical contact who submitted the initial domain request. Maybe he's been out visiting dermatologists.

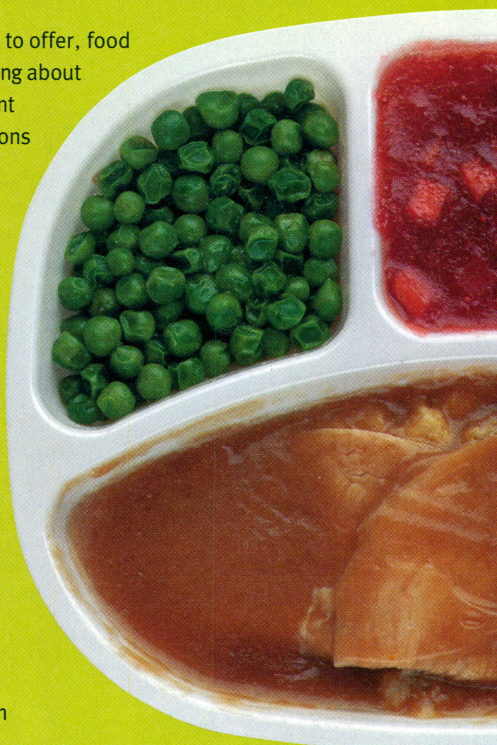


IF CYRANO HAD A HOMEPAGE

The big nose questionnaire (www.seanet.com/Users/tberry/survey1.html) claims to be "absolutely discreet." But its opening dialog box (above) makes you wonder.

CLICHÉ WATCH: EAT THE WEB

Of all the resources the World Wide Web has to offer, food doesn't rank high on the list (unless you're talking about food for thought). But you might reach a different conclusion if you relied on some of the publications we've been browsing lately. It seems as though these writers were trying to meet their deadlines right around dinnertime. Don't be fooled: The only thing about the Web that will give you indigestion is the diet of chips, pizza, and highly caffeinated beverages.



America Online's new Virtual Places turns chat into a movable feast on the World Wide Web.
—*USA Today*

There's no such thing as a free lunch, economists have told us, but so far, the Internet is a gourmet meal at a fast-food price.
—Jack Nease, *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*

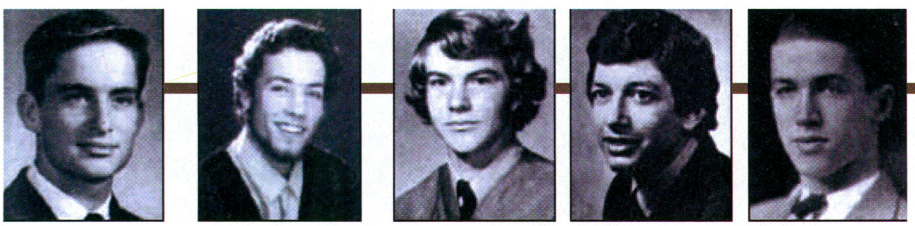
Web Candy
—Software from Innovus, www.innovusmm.com

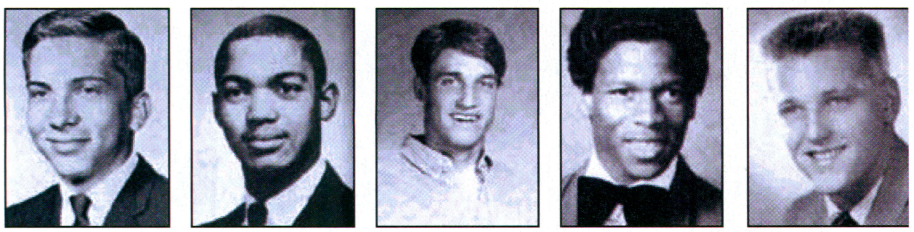
Looking for a (nearly) free lunch? Most ISPs serve up all-you-can-eat Internet access for about $19.95 a month.
—Angela Freeman, *Money* magazine.

By 2000, hundreds of millions of Internet users will have easy, instant access to a vast smorgasbord of information on practically any topic they care to explore.
—Doug Elix, managing director, IBM Australia

For dessert, you might swing over to the fascinating new Web-based daily investment newsletter called TheStreet.Com (http://www.thestreet.com).
—Jon D. Markman, *Los Angeles Times*

Clearly, Mickey likes to bide his time. As it did in the fields of home video and videogames, the Walt Disney Co. has come late to the World Wide Web picnic—and opened a restaurant.
—Ty Burr, *Entertainment Weekly*

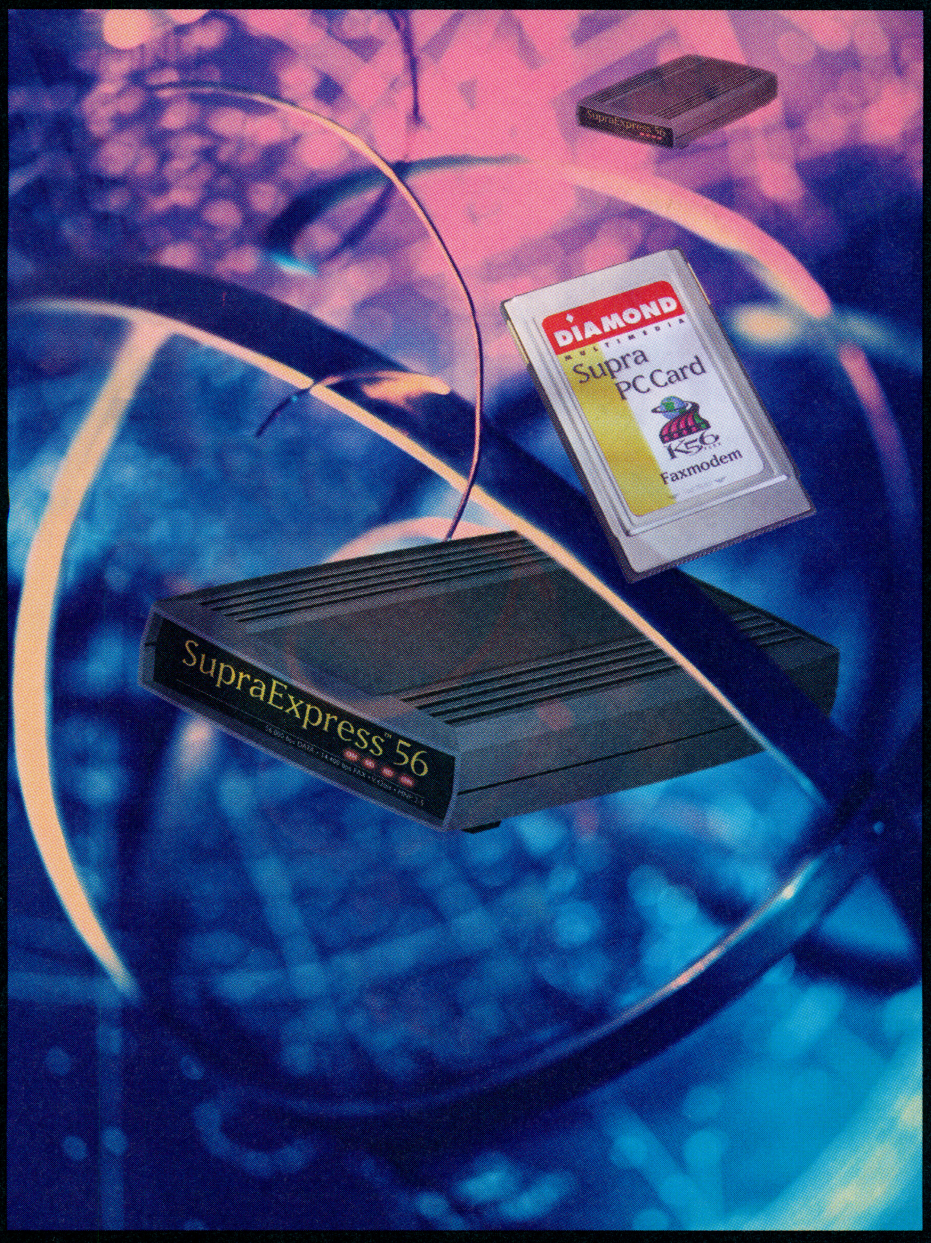

Michael Douglas | Not a celebrity yet... | Dennis Quaid | Jeff Goldblum | James Stewart



DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM SOMEWHERE?

Are you good with faces? How about grainy faces perched above out-of-style jackets and framed by bad haircuts? Head over to Celebrity Classmates (classmates.com/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/cmates/celeb.cgi), where each week you're given five high-school yearbook photographs and asked to spot the four future stars in the lineup of freeze-framed teens. Try your luck on the future baseball stars pictured in the bottom row at left (answers below). It's quick and fun. Though we have to wonder: Didn't any famous women attend high school?

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHNNY BENCH, REGGIE JACKSON, NOT A CELEBRITY YET, RICKY HENDERSON, ROGER MARIS



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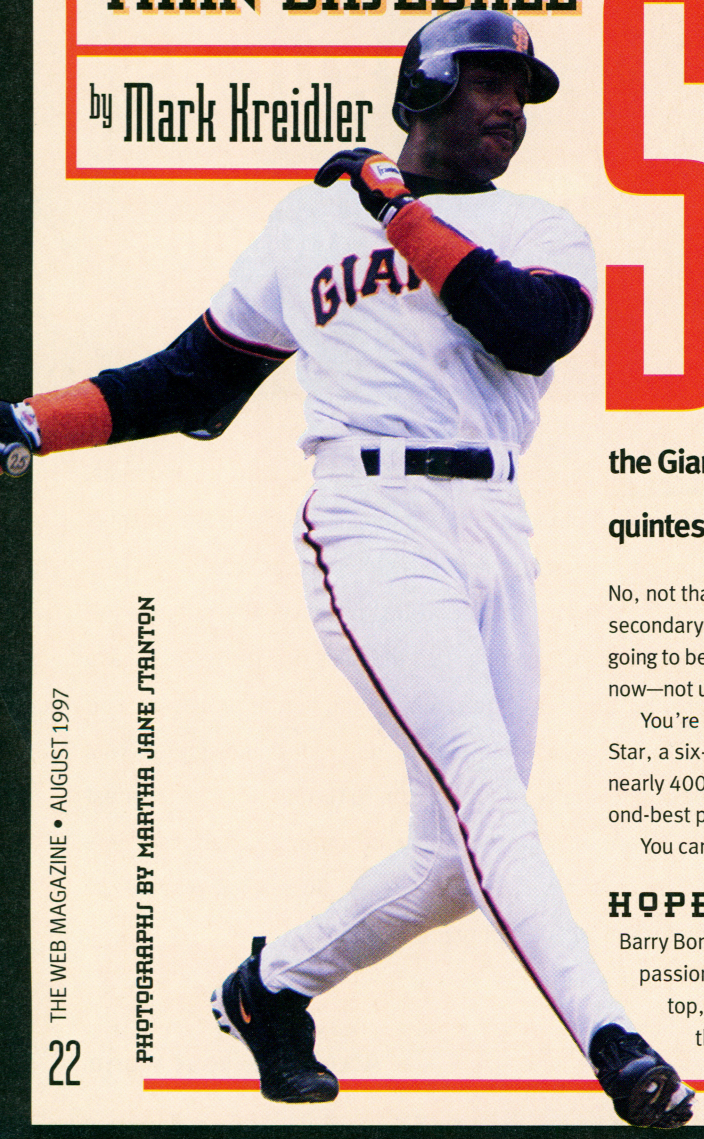
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BARRY BONDS

SUPERGEEK

HE'S THE BEST PLAYER IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE, BUT HE'D RATHER TALK COMPUTERS THAN BASEBALL

by Mark Kreidler



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTHA JANE STANTON

So Barry Bonds—6 feet 2 inches, 210 pounds, and about $75 million worth of Hall of Fame material—is sitting on a makeshift couch that looks like somebody yanked it out of the back of your dad's Suburban and heaved it into a hallway deep in the bowels of the ballpark formerly known as Candlestick in San Francisco. It is one hour before the first pitch of a game between the Giants and the visiting St. Louis Cardinals. And Bonds, the quintessential jock, is talking about the future of the industry.

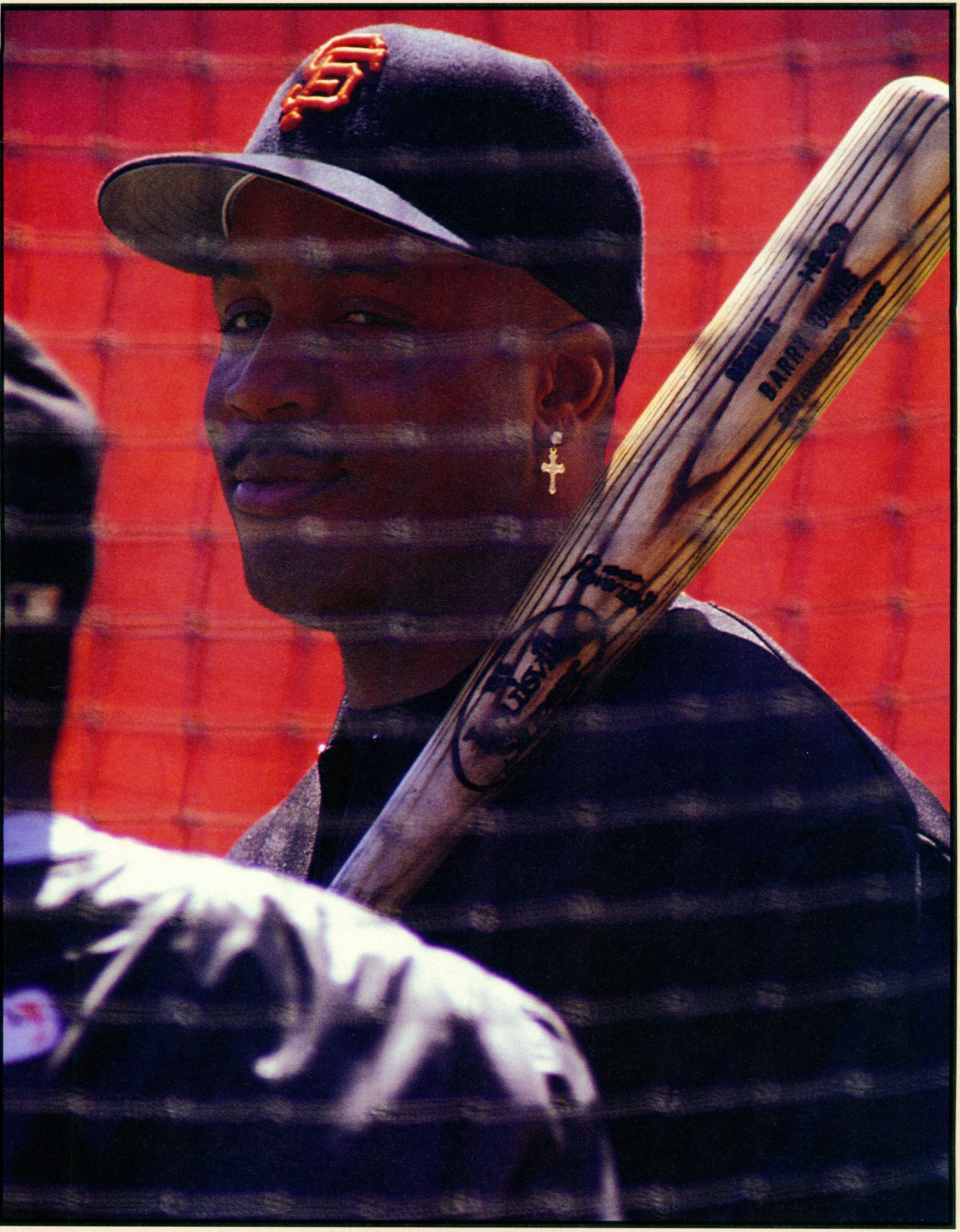
No, not that industry. "I think the personal computer industry itself is going to be somewhat secondary to what WebTV is going to be," Bonds is saying. "The interaction phase of it is just going to be phenomenal. Still, I don't recommend anybody going out and getting WebTV right now—not until they fine-tune it. Right now it's at a learning stage."

You're looking at a three-time Most Valuable Player of the National League, a six-time All-Star, a six-time Gold Glove fielder, a slugger/speedster with more than 1,000 career RBI and nearly 400 stolen bases, a man who is widely acknowledged to be either the best or the second-best player (after Ken Griffey, Jr.) in Major League Baseball. And what are you thinking?

You can't tell the geeks these days without a scorecard, is what.

HOPELESSLY HOOKED

Barry Bonds is hopeless. Barry Bonds is certifiable. "It's all I do," he says of his computer passion. "When I get home (from a game), I get on the computer. I bought a Toshiba laptop, so I can take it wherever I go. We're in a hotel on the road, and I'm hooked up on the phone line. It's what I do."


BARRY

Bonds doesn't merely grasp the concept, he lives it. The home he's building in Los Altos Hills (a well-monied corner of the San Francisco Bay Area) has his computer-mogul neighbors clucking: more than 13,000 square feet wired with fiber-optic and coaxial cables, with monitors in almost every room and full computer stations in several, state-of-the-art teleconferencing capabilities, and a mainframe system to run the entire show. Some 13 design companies from around the country are collaborating on the $3.5 million project; a company called Digital Interiors is supervising the electronic gadgetry.

"This one's being built for the technology of the 21st century," says Bonds—and the design proves it, down to touches like space-sensitive lighting that automatically shuts off when a room is empty. Projected monthly utility bills for the energy-efficient estate: $150.

BONDS AND INVESTMENT INTEREST

Not content merely to live his passion, Bonds bets on it as well. A budding venture capitalist, he is concentrating almost all his effort on finding smart computer-related start-ups to invest in. ("WorldCom's a good [investment], if you want to know what's coming out," he opines.)

And belying his on-field reputation as a first-class churl, Bonds is figuring out how to bring the technological future to inner-city schools. One company he's working with produces CD-ROM play-stations with preinstalled English and math games, which schoolkids can check out and take home. "There are a lot of successful people who want to help out the minority community, but sometimes it can be difficult [to know how]," Bonds says. "We want to try to help the community become more computer-savvy, because, you know, that's where it's all going."

Can an athlete really be this wired? True, Bonds probably could count on one hand the number of colleagues who share his interest. But he says the sheer volume of dollars flying around major-league clubhouses these days (average salary: more than $1 million per year) virtually guarantees some interest in the digital sphere. "A lot of players are maintaining their finances on Quicken, and a lot of guys are becoming literate to word processors and Microsoft Word because Windows is so easy to use now," he says. "Like me; I wasn't really DOS literate, but Windows changed a lot of things."

Money first lured Bonds to the keyboard: Man signs $44 million contract, man suddenly needs lots of financial information. In Bonds' case, the first windfall came in 1993, when the Giants lured him away from Pittsburgh as a free agent. In February of this year San Francisco gave its left fielder a two-year extension with a third-year option that will keep Bonds in a Giants uniform through at least 2000.

And as anyone who has made countless millions can attest, you want to protect that kind of money. The sports world is rife with stories of ignorant players either flushing obscene amounts of cash on horrible investments or getting swindled by supposed allies. Says Bonds, "The only people I trust are myself and God."

God being unavailable for daily financial consultation, Bonds surrounds himself with a handful of money managers, but makes virtually all the decisions personally—bank rates, stock strategies, portfolio decisions. And those decisions are driven, in part, by what Bonds finds on the Web—beginning, but by no means ending, with the Wall Street Journal Online.

"There are so many intelligent people who have Web sites now, people whose success you want to know more about," Bonds says. "If I see a comment by a guy in the newspaper, it's maybe one paragraph. Big deal. But I can go on the Internet and look up his Web site, find out who he is, go to other sites and read others' opinions about him or his ventures or whatever. You've got to do your homework, but the information is there."

If it sounds like an awful lot of money talk coming from a guy who hits baseballs for a living, welcome to sports in America, circa 1997. As one of the preeminent players of his generation, Bonds can fairly claim to have come by his millions honestly. But even modestly successful athletes are showered with an embarrassment of riches. And as the pile rises, so do the stakes. Bonds may be more preoccupied with managing his money than most—but then, he's got more money than most.

TOUCH OF THE SPORTS JUNKIE

Despite all the money talk, Bonds retains a touch of the sports junkie, though he sometimes seems to take pains to subvert it. His preferred jock stop is ESPNET SportsZone (for which, I must note, I occasionally write), where he goes for updates on games or to see how other players are performing. "You can find out what other teams are doing, to the day, to the minute. I like going onto ESPN just to see what's going on."

Does he ever do a Web search for Barry Bonds?

"Yeah, I've done that." He laughs. "It's all out there, my whole life story. But what can you say? It's great for sports fans, because they can get information on whatever player they're really interested in."

Of course, he does his cruising anonymously. Bonds maintains two separate e-mail addresses, neither of which is in his real name; one of these accounts is filtered, and only people with Bonds' permission can get through.



But as self-protective and uncompromising as Bonds the Baseball Star is—an athlete of barely controlled fury, he is legendary among sportswriters for being a difficult man to interview—Bonds the Geek is downright warm and fuzzy. Strikingly, he says he was essentially a nonreader before his introduction to the Web. Now he can't stop.

"I've lived my whole life here [in the Bay Area]," Bonds says, "and I never knew what was here in terms of the computer industry, the venture capitalist society. I'm essentially just trying to further my education on the Internet. For other people, it's other things; for me, it's a research tool."

He glances at his watch. It's time to play a game.

"One other thing that's great about the Net," he says as he starts walking away. "If a writer writes something bad, you can e-mail him back and say whatever you want." Like hundreds of opposition pitchers over the years, the poor scribe probably will never even know what hit him. ■

THE SITES

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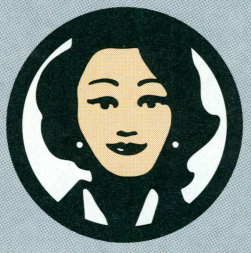
Mark Kreidler *is a sports columnist for the* Sacramento Bee *and a contributor to ESPNET SportsZone. Send questions and comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*

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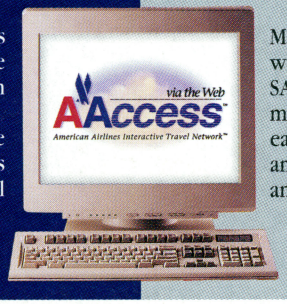
MARIE



Marie knows she's AAdvantage member 2NC0284. She currently has a total of 134,788 AAdvantage miles, and only needs 9,028 more this year to maintain AAdvantage Gold® status. She recently earned 4,345 miles on a sales trip. And she and her boyfriend, Hal, used 50,000 miles when she took him to meet her parents in Chicago. Oh yeah, she also knows how to change the address on her AAdvantage account (say, when she gets married) should the need ever arise. Not that she's holding her breath, Hal.

Why does Marie know so much? Because she uses AAccess™ – the American Airlines Interactive Travel Network™, available on the web or with Personal AAccess™ software.

With AAccess, Marie can manage her AAdvantage account right from her computer. Which includes tracking her AAdvantage miles from flights, hotel stays and rental cars. Booking and purchasing tickets. Looking up flight information. And using the new AAdvantage Locator Map, which helps Marie find ways to earn extra AAdvantage miles when traveling. She can also check out low Net SAAver Fares™ as well as special AAdvantage promotions. Like the one going on now, where you earn up to 500 bonus miles for every American and American Eagle® trip booked using AAccess and completed by the end of the year.



So visit AAccess via the Web™ on the Internet. Or, for a Windows®-based link to American Airlines, call for our Personal AAccess software.

AmericanAirlines®

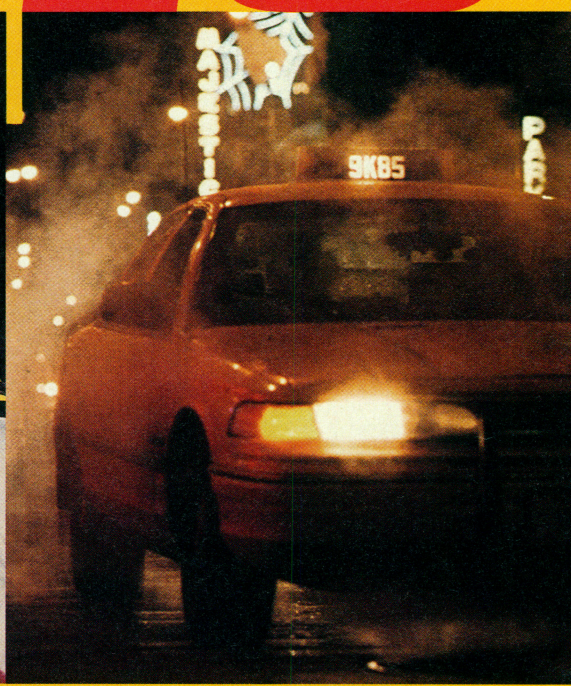
For Internet users, *AAccess via the Web* is located at **www.americanair.com** To order *Personal AAccess* for your PC, call **1-800-AACCESS (222-2377)**.

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CHECK OUT TOMORROW'S TV SHOWS TODAY...ON THE WEB

from me





t to set



3:00 am **New York City. The night is rife with menace. The only people roaming the streets are punks, drunks, and... a camera crew?**

"It's the most interesting time of day," says James Altucher, leader of this rogue band of intrepid tapers. "It's too late for the average worker to be out on the street, and even if your job starts early, you're probably still in bed."

Precisely the kind of scene that would appeal to a Web audience. Altucher's III:am combines interviews and video stills of the lovers, musicians, prostitutes, homeless, and average folks he encounters on the mean streets in the wee hours. It's been a well-publicized entertainment destination on HBO's homepage since the site's inception in May 1996. Now, Altucher and the cable movie channel are talking about bringing the show to

By Bob Ivry

From left to right: III:am's man on the street James Altucher accosts after-hours nightcrawlers and posts their observations on the Web; HBO's Emmy Award–winning television show Taxicab Confessions eavesdrops on passengers' conversations; Anita Liberty, doyenne of HBO's Web comic digi-drama Give Me Liberty, cracks a smile between gibes; an on-camera Altucher tries to delay last call at a New York City watering hole.

from net to set

television sometime in 1998. That would make III:am the first Web-born program to achieve the difficult transition from cybertainment to mainstream television.

race to the tube

Or would it? At press time, producers of the AOL Web site Santa's Homepage announced that they intend to bring the site—which received 50,000 letters from tots last holiday season, but is currently inactive—to TV as a half-hour ABC Christmas special this December. If all goes as planned, this will be the first project in which AOL leverages the pull-power of former NBC executive Brandon Tartikoff (now part of AOL's Greenhouse development group) to reach a mass, prime-time audience.

Which entertainment powerhouse will be first to develop a winning formula is anyone's guess. But HBO may be ahead of the pack in envisioning its Web site as an incubator, hatching new ideas for TV programming year-round. "The Web is a very low-cost idea development area," says Bruce Probst, HBO's vice president of technology services. "Compared to the cost of developing a traditional pilot—purchasing a script, hiring a crew and actors, the actual taping—it's very inexpensive. The Web gives us a great opportunity to experiment with new programming." "There's a lot of bad entertainment on the Web," adds Altucher, who works for online HBO by day and stalks interview subjects by night. "Good, original material will eventually find a home on other media or be able to stand alone."

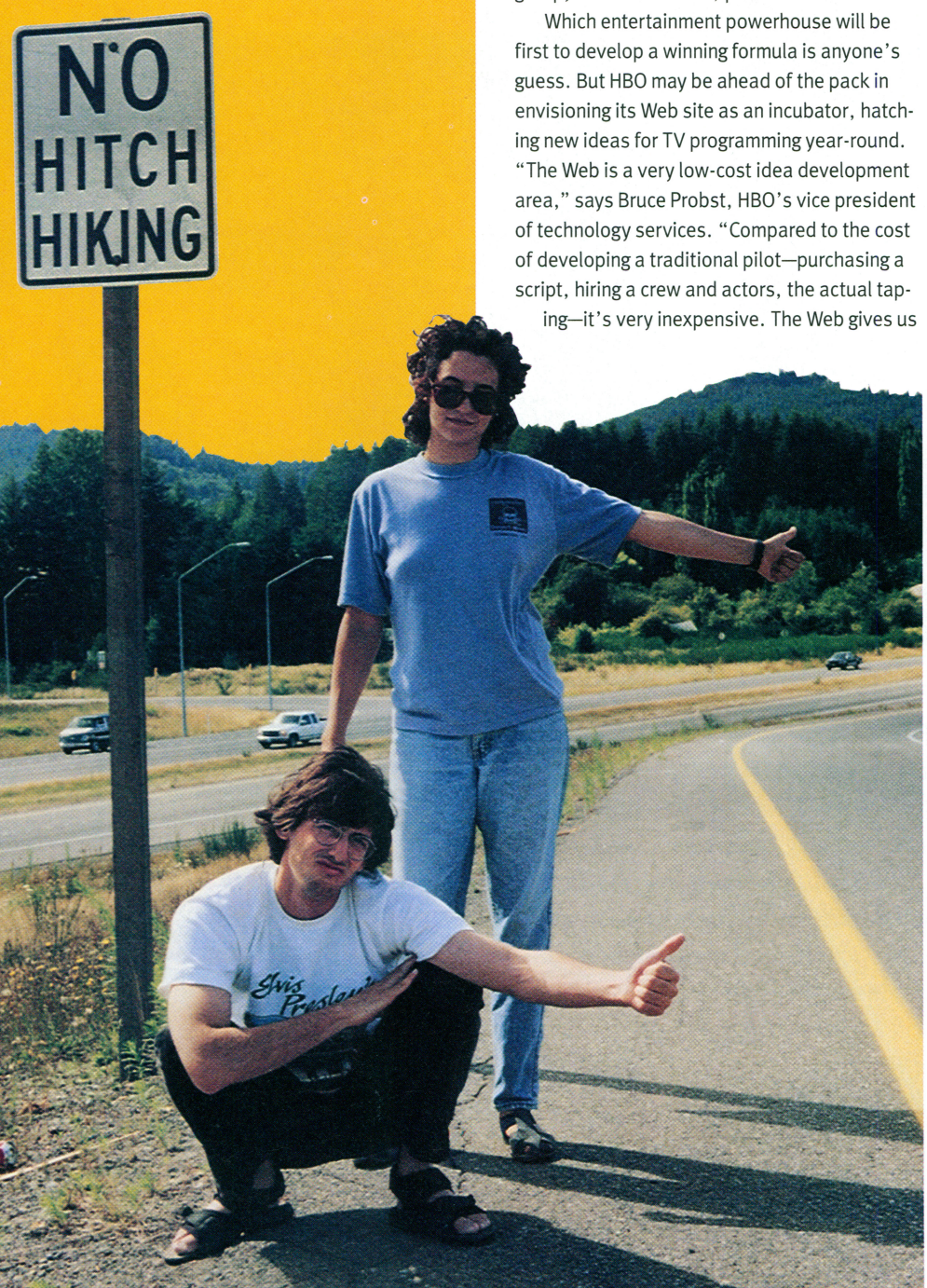
Altucher may be right. So far, though, material has moved strictly from TV to the Web, not vice versa. TV game shows like *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy* have proved to be particularly well suited to the online milieu. Both émigré game sites let fans play complete games online for free, thereby promoting the TV shows while developing fans of their own. More typical Web adjuncts to television shows are less interactive (and less compelling). The more conventional parts of the HBO site, for example, publicize the network's TV lineup with an up-to-date programming guide and behind-the-scenes background on shows like *Larry Sanders* and *Tales From the Crypt*.

crossover dreams

But such promotional gimmickry is humdrum compared with the Web's role as a proving ground, Probst says. "People seem to be moving away from informational use of the Web to using it more for entertainment," the HBO veep says. "We use the metaphor that the Web site is another channel. We want to provide content as well as promote our television shows." The TV metaphor is clearly in vogue with major-league online networks: both MSN (Microsoft's subscription-only network) and HotWired label their various programs "channels."

As III:am prepares to become one of the first Web-to-TV crossovers, other HBO online auteurs are lining up for their own shots. Among the hopefuls, comedian/poet/social theorist/wannabe household name Anita Liberty provides a light-hearted look at the lovelorn in her Web-based HBO digi-drama, Give Me Liberty. Liberty, a character created by New York performance artist Suzanne Weber, is "dedicating her life to humiliating her boyfriend Mitchell," who left her, after three and a half years, for another woman. "Healing the hurt by hate" is how Anita copes. In a site dominated by text, Anita offers a datebook, where visitors can eavesdrop on her attempts to replace the evil Mitchell. ("We had so much in common," she laments about her latest blind date. "We both had skin.") And she provides postcards for the dumped to send to their exes. ("You were wrong," one reads. "You always were. I am right. I always have been. Who's sorry now? Answer the question.")

"HBO is giving me an unbelievable berth to



PREVIOUS PAGE: (FROM LEFT) WALTER CESSNA/HBO, WILL HART/HBO, SCOTT JONES, WALTER CESSNA/HBO
THIS PAGE: PHOTO COURTESY DREW FELLMAN & LEILA GORCHEV

execute my vision," says Weber, 32, who says she's talking to different TV outlets about developing a sitcom based on her character. "HBO [TV] would be a lovely home, but if a network said, 'Here's a huge amount of cash,' I'd do it."

you're on candid cab

Says Probst: "Comedy is the toughest thing in any medium to get across, but we're very interested in working with a variety of comedians to bring funny stuff to the Web and, perhaps after that, to television." The grittier side of HBO online is satisfied by RoadKill, the brainchild of Columbia Journalism School grads Leila Gorchev and Drew Fellman. Conceptually, it closely resembles a program already airing on HBO called *Taxicab Confessions* (which also has a Web presence on HBO's site). To do RoadKill, the two twentysomethings borrowed Leila's dad's Oldsmobile, fitted it with camera equipment, and took to the road, picking up every hitchhiker they saw and recording their stories. After six weeks, they had 80 hours of film.



Left: RoadKill's Drew Fellman and Leila Gorchev hit the highway, sharing sordid road stories online. Above: HBO's III:am occupies a dark, bleary-eyed corner of the Web. Will it ever see the bright light of prime-time TV?

"About half the people we met were involved in some way with the criminal justice system," says Fellman, 26, who discovered that no one hitchhikes for the fun of it anymore. "Almost all of them were in the middle of some sort of crisis, whether it had to do with love, money, or the law. Every single one of them had a story to tell."

In *Taxicab Confessions*, HBO producers "spent several weeks in New York City following a single taxicab, which had been rigged with lipstick-sized cameras and several microphones, hidden around the interior of the cab as well as on its roof. The cameras and mikes were hooked up to video decks placed in the trunk of the taxi; an additional audio/video linkup allowed the producers, who discreetly followed the cab in an unmarked mobile production van, to prompt the taxicab driver with questions for riders via a tiny earphone." Pretty clever, huh? The Emmy judges thought so. *Taxicab* won a Primetime Emmy in 1995 for Outstanding Information Special (an award it shared with another HBO documentary, *One Survivor Remembers*). HBO's best material is almost always mettlesome and raw.

"Give Me Liberty and RoadKill really have a bit of an edge to them," says Alex Kam, who oversees the site as HBO director of interactive ventures. "They're not quite mainstream. That's exactly what we were looking for."

the ride stuff

Later this year, HBO online will again venture into uncharted territory with a virtual reality companion piece to the upcoming HBO series *From the Earth to the Moon*, about NASA's Apollo space program. The TV component, produced by Tom Hanks and airing in early '98, will consist of 13 one-hour episodes. Webheads inspired by the mini-series can get a pseudo-lunar experience of their own by tuning into the site and taking a VR trip to the moon and (with luck) back. "You'll be able to climb into a spaceship, orbit, land on the moon, drive on the moon, and go back," Probst promises. "The whole mission will be simulated, and we'll be able to incorporate multiple users. In other words, you can be sitting in New York and you can travel in the spacecraft with people from L.A. and do everything together."

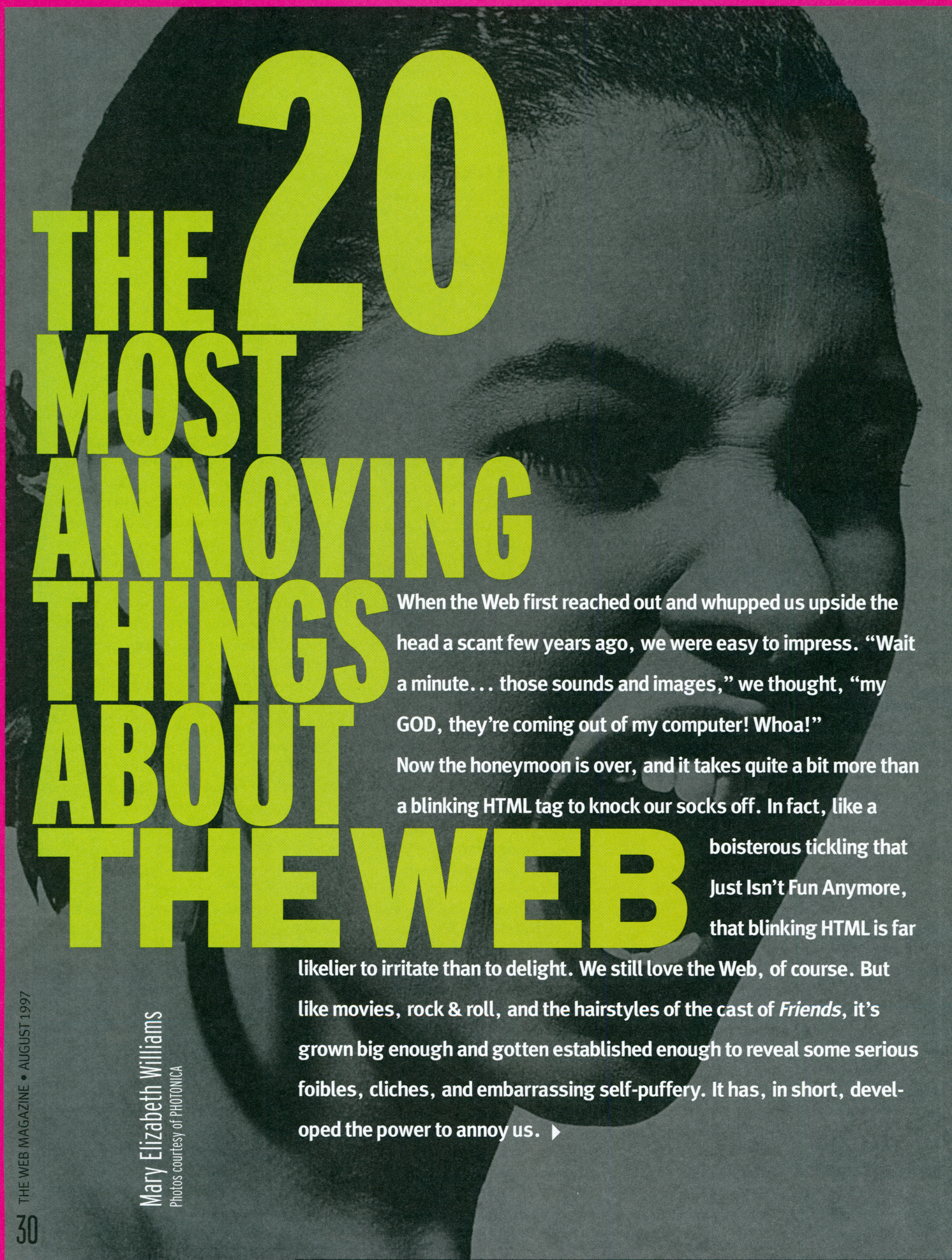
The Web project requires close cooperation with HBO's TV people, but Probst says his department's still the cable network's little brother. "We're too much in the nascent stages to be given as much attention as other aspects of HBO," Probst says. "We're too new yet." That may change, Probst says, with new technology—like increased bandwidth—that will enable Web sites to provide higher-quality entertainment to users.

"The next year will see a real ramp-up in the things we'll be able to do," he says. As long as the HBO online folks don't roam the streets at 3 a.m. too often, they'll continue to be among the most innovative entertainment channels on the Web.

THE SITES

HBO
www.hbo.com
WHEEL OF FORTUNE
www.spe.sony.com/Pictures/tv/wheel/wheel.html
JEOPARDY
www.spe.sony.com/Pictures/tv/jeopardy/jeopardy.html

Bob Ivry *is an entertainment reporter for the* Bergen Record *in Hackensack, N.J. Send e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*



THE 20 MOST ANNOYING THINGS ABOUT THE WEB

When the Web first reached out and whupped us upside the head a scant few years ago, we were easy to impress. "Wait a minute... those sounds and images," we thought, "my GOD, they're coming out of my computer! Whoa!"

Now the honeymoon is over, and it takes quite a bit more than a blinking HTML tag to knock our socks off. In fact, like a boisterous tickling that Just Isn't Fun Anymore, that blinking HTML is far likelier to irritate than to delight. We still love the Web, of course. But like movies, rock & roll, and the hairstyles of the cast of *Friends*, it's grown big enough and gotten established enough to reveal some serious foibles, cliches, and embarrassing self-puffery. It has, in short, developed the power to annoy us. ▸

Mary Elizabeth Williams

Photos courtesy of PHOTONICA

There are many, many, many annoying things about the Web. In fact, in compiling this list the challenge was not in finding 20 irritants, but in winnowing the possibilities to a mere score.

That's why we called in the experts. Scientists at the Center for Advanced Webology, a nonprofit research facility in Hoboken, New Jersey, have been analyzing Web trends since the dawn of Mosaic. The center has already gained a reputation for groundbreaking work: Back in 1995, its analysts accurately predicted the eclipse of Pamela Anderson Lee by Teri Hatcher among horny Web nerds. More recently, the center has published a sure-to-be-controversial Freudian analysis of the shooting stars imagery in Netscape Navigator.

At our request, the Center analyzed hundreds of potential Web annoyances. Researchers then developed the Annoyance Algorithm, which integrates the Time Suck Factor (how much of your life is going to be robbed by a given Web annoyance?), the Self-Inflicted/Forcible Torment Ratio (can you avoid the annoyance, or is it thrust upon you?), the Uniqueness to Cyberspace Aspect (poor spelling vs. Push technology, for example), and the Potential Commercial Exploitability Attribute (will someone try to make a buck out of this annoyance?). After these factors are combined, the resulting figure is multiplied by the item's relevance to Kevin Bacon, yielding something scientists call the Web Annoyance Factor—or WAF for short. A WAF of 100 means an item is as repulsive as an animated Macarena GIF accompanied by a sound clip of the "heyyyyyy" part of the song. An index of 0 indicates that the item delivers the same exhilaration you felt the last time a search engine actually found what you were looking for.

Herewith, then, the results, in all their scientifically irrefutable glory.

1 PLUG-INS FOR ME BUT NOT FOR THEE

You want to check out a site your most obsessively wired pal says is profoundly cool. But when you get there: "To view this page, you must have this brand new viewer, that sound system, and a whole mess of other stuff we invented ourselves last week. Otherwise—too bad, LOSER!!" Sure, Web developers should be up on all the latest gnarly new apps; but asking the same of the average user is a bit much. Besides, nobody likes a show-off.

Web Annoyance Factor: 98

Coping Strategy: Send e-mail to the sysop saying that his page is not compatible with a particularly bitchin' ultramod plug-in you've just discovered. This will drive him crazy. Barring that, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. Netscape Plug-Ins: home.netscape.com/comprod/products/navigator/version-2.0/plugins.

2 GHOST TOWNS

You feel good. You've formulated an incredibly complicated search, using only the most relevant keywords and the most sophisticated Boolean logic, and at last the results await you. But then you start clicking. The first page reads, "Forbidden! Sorry, you're trying to reach a nonexistent account on our server!" The second consists of nothing but that "Under construction" sign. On the third, you notice that the "Last updated" date is from the year you wore a Lance Ito costume to the Halloween party. Everywhere you turn, the links are dead, the info is outdated, and a Brandoesque air of letting oneself go permeates the whole sorry business. Somebody, shoot these things and put them out of their misery.

Web Annoyance Factor: 95

Coping Strategy: Turn every search into a Vegas-like game of chance. Take bets on whether the sites you're trying to access actually exist. Reward or punish yourself as appropriate.

3 LUNCH MEAT, BREATH MINTS, AND THE GEEKS WHO THINK THEY'RE "FUNNY"

Spam, Mentos, Pez—how droll, how amusing! Online shrines devoted to campy food products form an entire Web subgenre. But at a



certain point, hip self-referential humor becomes self-parody. Let's just move on and become obsessed with Chicken of the Sea or something—anything, as long as it's new.

Web Annoyance Factor: 94

Coping Strategy: Wait for *Wired* to declare Mentos "tired."

4 PEOPLE TALKING WITHOUT SPEAKING, PEOPLE HEARING WITHOUT LISTENING

"Hi!"
"Hi!"
"Is anYbodY THERE?????"
"Im hear d00d!"
"Is anYbodY else THERE?????"
"Im hear! Whaz wrong with me? 2 good 2 talk 2 me????"
"SHUT UP"
"No YOU shut up BUTTMUNCH!!!!"

Welcome to the wonderful world of chat, where the miracle of IRC enables the bored and illiterate to be tedious *that much faster*.

Web Annoyance Factor: 90

Coping Strategy: Unless you're fourteen and consider exchanges on what sucks and what's cool to be Algonquin-caliber banter—avoid, avoid, avoid.



5 THE BOOB TUBE

Teri, Pammy, Sandra, Drew—all in various states of luscious, heaving, pouting dishabille—can you ever

TIMELINE: ANNOYING U.S. INNOVATIONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

We all know the Web's annoying. But no more so than real life—particularly real life in 20th century America. Herewith a short history of Great Moments in Modern Annoyance.

1901 First motor vehicle registration. Some people are still in line.

1910 Hallmark Cards founded. A breakthrough in the mass production of personalized sentiments.

Hallmark Cards

1913 First personal income tax imposed by the federal government.

1917 First standardized "intelligence" test, given to U.S. Army recruits to determine who is smart enough for trench warfare.

1921 First professional "public relations counsel" (Edward L. Bernays) sets up shop. The spin doctor is born.

1922 New York radio station WEAF sells the first broadcast advertisement.

get enough? Yes, actually. The online appreciation of these talented performers' *oeuvres* long ago crossed over from measured admiration into deep, deep dorkdom. And the pix pop up in the unlikeliest places ("Here's my Ph.D. dissertation, here's my honorary degree from Harvard, and here are some hot JPEGs of Teri Hatcher!"). Guys, here's a hint: The more time you spend hunting for images to add to your personal collection of *Baywatch* babes, the slimmer your chances of ever having sex with a real woman.

Web Annoyance Factor: 87

Coping Strategy: Never attempt any search containing the word "hot."

6 DANCING GIFS



Spinning globes. Flaming skulls. Bouncing balls. That stupid little Java gnome. They distract you while you're trying to read the rest of the page. They slow down your browsing. And they make your computer do that highly irritating rrr-rrr-click loading sound until you JUST CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE. Kudos to the smart alecks who include animated GIFs that STOP moving once they've done their little dances. And may those who litter their sites with chorus lines of gyrating doodads be consigned to spending eternity on a chat channel reading how much their work like, sux.

Web Annoyance Factor: 86

Coping Strategy: Steer clear of any pages devoted to heavy metal and/or Java programming.

7 AND NOW, A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

Sure, we all need to make a buck. But riddle me this: Is Bob Q. Browser likely to retain kindly feelings toward a site that forces him to view a splash screen of ad copy before the page he really wants to see will load? We don't think so. Nor is Bob gonna take kindly to blinking, beeping, jittering messages-from-our-sponsors cartwheeling across the top of the page (see Dancing GIFs above). Invented, no doubt, by the same genius who came up with magazine scent strips and blow-in cards, these intrusive, hyperkinetic come-ons inspire malaise, rage, and (in extreme cases) tearful reunions with text-only browsers.

Web Annoyance Factor: 84

Coping Strategy: Turn off your graphics, use Lynx, or suffer.

8 HUBRIS RUN AMOK: THE AWARD-WINNING WEB



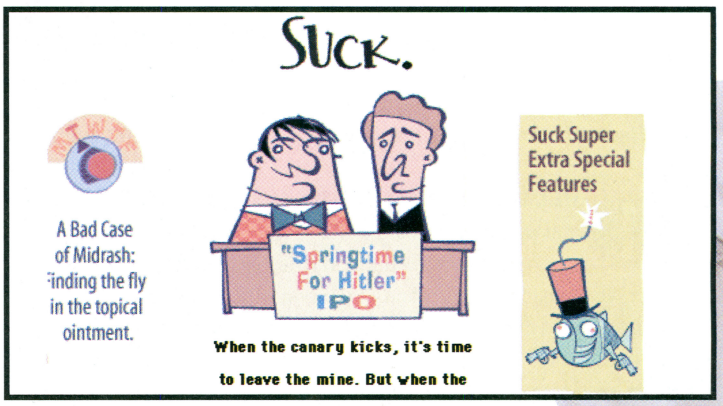
Almost as soon as the Web emerged from the Net's primordial soup, people were congratulating themselves for being on it. Scarcely a week goes by without a black-tie event honoring people who usually work in their bathrobes. And speaking of honors, is every other page out there now graced with a ubiquitous Top 5% or Cool Site of the Day icon? Or is that just how it seems? If you have a Web site, chances are you've won some kind of award for it—from "Excellence in use of fonts" to "Most creative application of stuff stolen from the official Barney page." Admittedly, we at *THE WEB Magazine* have done our part to keep the ball rolling: We handed out the coveted "Webbys" back in March. The only good thing about online awards: No Celine Dion.

Web Annoyance Factor: 82

Coping Strategy: Permanently forget to pick up your tux from the cleaners.

9 THAT DIGERATI ATTITUDE

Eons ago, when the initial surge of Web hype had reached an ecstatic, onanistic fever pitch, Suck (www.suck.com) came along with a shiny pin to burst everyone's bubble. It was mean and very, very funny. But now, like a sad little cyberspace Don Rickles, Suck limps along, doomed to tell the same joke for all eternity. God knows the volume of mockworthy material online has only grown, yet Suck's once perversely original sting now feels innocuous and obligatory. Worse, the sneering, I'm-so-hip attitude is spreading—with "veterans" (anyone



who's been online longer than you) pontificating, punditing, and generally getting uppity about anything they didn't think of first. Only on the Web could people who live on Big Macs and never leave their apartments consider themselves the apotheoses of cool.

Web Annoyance Factor: 78

Coping Strategy: Stay away from Suck, HotWired, Feed, The Well... oh, never mind.

10 TRAPPED IN FRAMES

Ooops! We click on a link, and suddenly new browsers start popping open like tenement windows in July. Or we click on a link and find the new page wedged inside a frame in the original page. Excuse us, but—where the hell are we? Frame technology was supposed

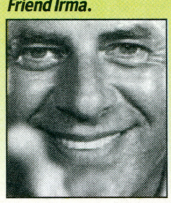
1928 The Academy Awards. First self-congratulatory entertainment industry awards.



1935 Gallup Poll begins. First "scientific" opinion survey, leading to worldwide media adoption of manufactured opinion research as news.

1945 Foote, Cone & Belding cofounder Emerson Foote urges his fellow ad execs to start work on TV commercials.

1949 Jerry Lewis, appears in his first major motion picture—the forgettable *My Friend Irma.*



1955 The Davy Crockett hat. First child product fad, paving the way for Cabbage Patch Dolls, Tickle Me Elmo, Beanie Babies, et al.



1959 Amway launches. First "multilevel marketing business": Your friends and neighbors pester you to buy unwanted products, then recruit you to do the same.



1959 Barbie. Human anatomy unrealistically redefined for impressionable minds.



to make navigation easier, eliminating the need for endless backward clicking while you coast around a site. And that's groovy. But please, if we click on a link, don't weasel around: Just take us to the damn page.

Web Annoyance Factor: 77.5

Coping Strategy: Whenever possible, choose the low-tech, no-frames version of a site. When you can't, pout.

11 WEB PAGES FOR DUMMIES



Why do some Web pages assume you have the intelligence of a farm animal that's lapped up too much moonshine? Were they designed by farm animals that lapped up too much moonshine? This online equivalent of speaking verrry slowwwwly manifests itself in all sorts of ways, but the most annoying one can be summed up in two words: Click here. "Click Here" is the hypertext equivalent of including the instruction "Turn Over" at the bottom of the first page of a letter. Oh, we should click? Here? On this link? Really? If somebody invented a program to automatically block pages containing the "Click Here" label, we would nominate that person for a Nobel prize.

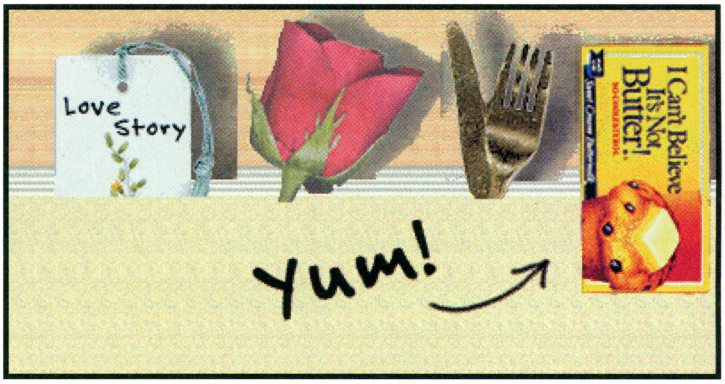
Web Annoyance Factor: 75

Coping Strategy: Click there and go elsewhere.



12 BIG BUSINESS, BAD WEB SITES

Does the Web really need the I Can't Believe It's Not Butter homepage? Apparently someone in the mailroom tipped off our friends in corporate America that this Web thing was where all the hip, moneyed folk were hanging out. So the suits got their production



departments to learn a little code and slap together some of the most boring, useless content ever created in any medium. It's tolerable when Joe Loser's space contains nothing but ridiculous trivia and broken links. It's less charming when American Food Corp. hires a bunch of high-priced "content developers" to get the same results.

Web Annoyance Factor: 74

Coping Strategy: Consider eliminating all partially hydrogenated vegetable oils from your diet.

13 OVERZEALOUS LEGAL BEAGLES

"Dear Tiny Insignificant Speck of Humanity: It has come to our attention that your site includes an image of a cartoon canine which bears an extremely close resemblance to Scooby Doo™, particularly with regard to color, size, number of legs, and snout depth. We advise that you cease and desist immediately from this consistent pattern of actionable misappropriation... blah blah blah... official notice... blah blah blah... infringe... blah blah blah... fines... blah blah blah... jail... blah blah blah. Yours sincerely, Giganto-Corp's Well-Paid Legal Jackals."

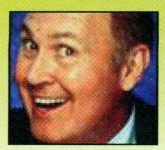
Web Annoyance Factor: 72

Coping Strategy: Revel in the knowledge that the task of hunting down and litigating against every site that features an unauthorized Bart Simpson image would make Sisyphus laugh.

14 OBSESSIVE/COMPULSIVES ON THE WEB

If you have ever come across a page consisting of someone's complete, annotated roster of his or her CD collections, there

1960 First Ronald McDonald. It's future weatherman Willard Scott.



1960

1961 Bell Labs develops Bell-boy, the first pager. Drug dealers pick up on the technology 20 years later.

1961

1966 The Monkees debut. First completely artificial pop group, "inspiring" the Archies, Milli Vanilli, and others.



1966

1967 First anorexic supermodel, Twiggy, becomes a star, making the world safe for future Calvin Klein ads.



1967 New York initiates its state lottery. First government promotion of gambling for the "public good."

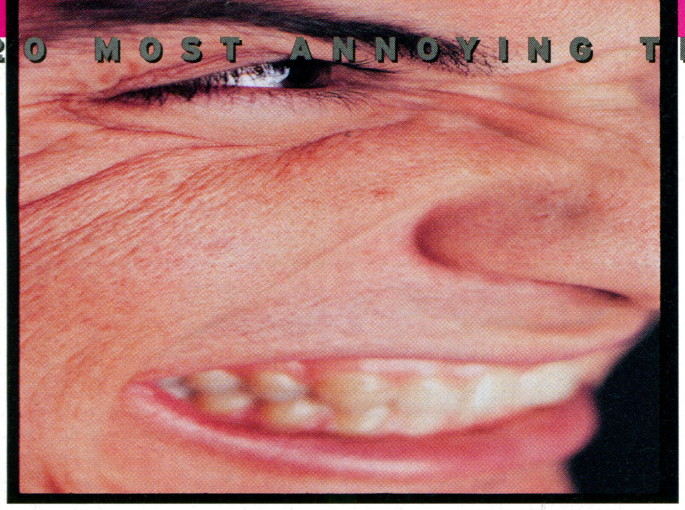
1967

1973 Début of Lite Beer from Miller. First brew to promote higher water content as a virtue.



1977 *Star Wars* introduces the movie-as-theme-park-ride aesthetic. The end of movie dialog as we know it.





is a very real possibility that you have been insufferably bored. Conversely, if you yourself have ever compiled such a list and then gone the extra mile of posting that list on the Web, there is a very real possibility that you are insufferably boring. In either case, you may at least take comfort in the fact that you are legion.

Web Annoyance Factor: 70

Coping Strategy: Resist the urge to enumerate.

15 WORLD WIDE WORRYWARTS

Yes, the world is a dangerous place and no doubt the Web has more than its share of the antisocial, the perverse, and the just plain wack. Your local news outlets have probably already done a searing investigation of online ax murderers who find their prey in chat rooms. But let's be real: It ain't Sodom and Gommorah by way of downtown Beirut out there. Armchair punditry on the dangers of the Web—particularly from the mouths of technophobes trying to score political/journalistic brownie points—ought to be punishable by forced exposure to every ultimate cool personal CD collection list ever created.

Web Annoyance Factor: 69

Coping Strategy: Fire off an impassioned letter to the editor debunking alarmism. Refrain from language that makes you sound like an online ax murderer.

16 SEARCH AND DESTROY

Tried to find anything lately? Unless you've got an advanced degree in mathematics, every search for "Davey Jones+Monkees+tambourine+GIF" is likely to turn up 10,000 hits, 9,950 of which concern pirate slang, lemurs, the Byrds, and Teri Hatcher. And of the 50 relevant links, 49 will be expired. Kind of makes you want to give up and just go to the library, doesn't it?

Web Annoyance Factor: 66

Coping Strategy: Get over the Monkees.

17 TOMORROW AND TOMORROW AND TOMORROW

Faster Net connections. Push, VRML, 3-D avatars... it's all coming. So is Christmas. So what? The nerds of the world have not been whipped into this big a collective frenzy since Lawnmower Man had them thinking they'd be knockin' virtual boots with Demi Moore by now. Yeah, there are some cool possibilities down the road. Can we talk about something else now?

Web Annoyance Factor: 63

Coping Strategy: Stay away from CINet, Wired News, PC Magazine/World/Computing Online, and all your nerdy friends.

18 PRIVACY (OR LACK THEREOF)

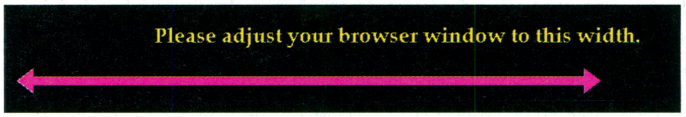
There are good cookies—the kind usually made by Pepperidge Farm. And there are scary, creepy cookies—the kind that hang out on your hard drive and tell every Web site you visit who you are, where you've been, and how it can bother you for the rest of your online life. Perhaps they'd like a little more? A lock of hair, maybe? A tissue sample? That small part of your frontal lobe that remembers your phone number from three apartments ago? And some people wonder why there's such a furor over privacy rights...

Web Annoyance Factor: 58

Coping Strategy: Do all your surfing from your boss's computer.

19 IF THE BROWSERS DON'T FIT, YOU MUST QUIT

It's that phrase: "Adjust your browser." Even if you're surfing on a JumboTron monitor, you must constantly shift, tug, and



stretch your browser window to accommodate the quirky dimensions and less-than-dazzling graphics for all too many sites. All that accommodating can leave you with a squirmy, breaking-in-a-new-pair-of-jeans feeling. But at least if pants suddenly don't fit, you know the problem lies with you—not with some sadistic, whimsical jeans-smith.

Web Annoyance Factor: 54

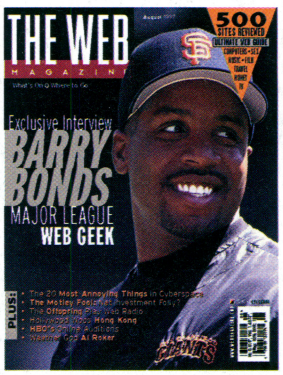
Coping Strategy: Find one page you like, adjust your browser, and never go anywhere else again.

20 MAGAZINES ABOUT THE WEB

They're on the newsstand? Made of old fashioned pulp and staples? But they're about the Web? What a loony idea. It'll never work.

Web Annoyance Factor: 50

Coping Strategy: Resistance is futile.



Mary Elizabeth Williams *writes* THE WEB*'s Weird column and hosts Table Talk at Salon (www.salonmagazine.com). She has written for* The Nation, Wired, Fast Company, bOING bOING, *geekgirl, and Bust. Send comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*

1978 First answering machine. Precursor to call-waiting and voice-mail.

1978 *Halloween*, first serial splatter film. Introduces the lets-hack-up-some-teenagers-because-they-were-having-sex aesthetic.

1981 First issue of *USA Today*. Lowest-common-denominator print coverage of national events.

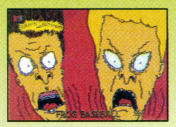


1984 First multisound car alarm . Baaaaaaaa; woot-woot-woot; ee-aw, ee-aw, ee-aw; chirk-chirk-chirk.

1992 First episode of Barney & Friends. Educational TV with no perceptible teaching component.



1992 Beavis & Butt-head appear on MTV, in the infamous "Frog Baseball" episode.



1996 Spice Girls release their first album and hit the big time. Most profound girl group out of the UK since Bananarama.

1978 **1978** **1981** **1984** **1992** **1996**

Please tear along the dashed line

The Bookmark

AUGUST 1997

Our Monthly Roundup of Essential Web Sites

DON'T LEAVE HOME(PAGE) WITHOUT IT. Our Bookmark consolidates all those little yellow stickies with www... written on them, so you don't have to. In our search for the best and the brightest, we focus on pages with broad appeal, favoring the comprehensive (e.g., an online bookstore) over the specific (an author's homepage). Über sites that provide necessary Web-surfing tools make the grade, too. With each issue, we take a close look at the sites on this list, losing some and adding others to keep The Bookmark fresh. And remember, the whole lineup is right at your fingertips on our Web site, at **www.webmagazine.com**. Just click on any of the addresses listed there and instantly link to the Web site of your choice. You still here? Go surf!

BOOKS/MAGAZINES

Alt.Culture ..... www.altculture.com
Amazon.com Books ..... www.amazon.com
BarnesandNoble.com ..... www.barnesandnoble.com
New York Times on the Web: Books ... www.nytimes.com/books
Salon www.salon1999.com

COMPUTERS

CINET ..... www.cnet.com
Macintouch ..... www.macintouch.com
News.com ..... www.news.com
Shareware.com ..... www.shareware.com

FILM

E! Online ..... www.eonline.com
Film.Com ..... www.film.com
Internet Movie Database ..... www.us.imdb.com
Mr. Showbiz ..... www.MrShowbiz.com
PK Baseline ..... www.pkbaseline.com/baseline.html

GAMES

Games Domain ..... www.gamesdomain.co.uk
Gamesmania ..... www.gamesmania.com
Gamespot ..... www.gamespot.com
WorldVillage ..... www.worldvillage.com
You Don't Know Jack ..... www.bezerk.com

HOME/EDUCATION

Car Talk ..... www.cartalk.com
Family Planet ..... family.starwave.com
HomeArts ..... www.homearts.com
Home Ideas ..... www.homeideas.com

LIVING/HEALTH

Ask Dr. Weil ..... cgi.pathfinder.com/drweil
CNN's Health Report ..... www.cnn.com/HEALTH
The Merck Manual ..... www.merck.com
Reuters Health Information Services ... www.reutershealth.com
Thrive ..... pathfinder.com/thrive

MONEY

CNNfn ..... cnnfn.com
Consumer World ..... www.consumerworld.org
Fortune ..... pathfinder.com/fortune
U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission ..... www.sec.gov
U.S. Small Business Administration ..... www.sba.gov

MUSIC

Addicted to Noise ..... www.addict.com
Soundz ..... www.soundz.com
TheDJ ..... www.thedj.com
Trouser Press ..... www.trouserpress.com
Tunes.com ..... www.tunes.com

POLITICS/LAW

All Politics ..... www.allpolitics.com
CapWeb ..... www.capweb.net
Disinformation ..... www.disinfo.com
Law Journal Extra! ..... www.ljx.com
The Legal Information Institute ..... www.law.cornell.edu/lii.table.html
Wired News ..... www.wired.com/news/politics

SCIENCE

The Discovery Channel Online ..... www.discovery.com
The Exploratorium ..... www.exploratorium.edu
NASA ..... www.nasa.gov
Scientific American ..... www.sciam.com
Smithsonian Magazine ..... www.smithsonianmag.si.edu

SEXUALITY

Adult Check ..... www.adultcheck.com
Bianca's Smut Shack ..... www.bianca.com/shack
Coalition for Positive Sexuality ..... www.positive.org/cps
The Safer Sex Pages ..... www.safersex.org
World of Romance ..... www.godek.com

SPORTS

ESPNET SportsZone ..... espnet.sportszone.com
Great Outdoors Recreation Pages ..... www.gorp.com
John Skilton's Baseball Links ..... www.baseball-links.com/homepage.html
Major League Baseball@BAT ... www.majorleaguebaseball.com

TRAVEL

City.Net ..... www.city.net
Lonely Planet ..... www.lonelyplanet.com
MapQuest ..... www.mapquest.com
Travelocity ..... www.travelocity.com

TV/RADIO

EDrive ..... www.edrive.com
The Gist ..... www.thegist.com
National Public Radio ..... www.npr.org
TV Guide ..... www.tvguide.com
UltimateTV ..... www.ultimatetv.com

WEB TOOLS

Excite ..... www.excite.com
HotBot ..... www.hotbot.com
Internet Explorer ..... www.microsoft.com/ie
Netscape ..... home.netscape.com
Plug In Plaza ..... www.browserwatch.com/plug-in.html
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GUTHY-RENKER INTERNET

ART/DESIGN | BY REENA JANA

An Artful Move

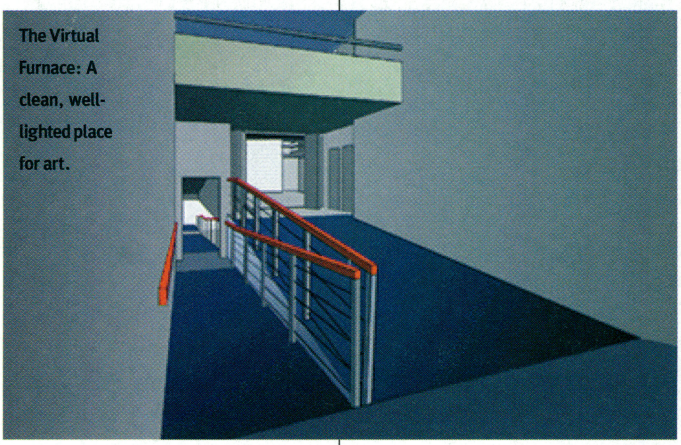
New York's Franklin Furnace is reborn on the Web

MOST ALTERNATIVE ART galleries would celebrate having beaten the odds against surviving 20 years in business. Leave it to New York's controversial Franklin Furnace—the avant-garde bastion that launched the careers of Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, and Eric Bogosian—to take a different approach. After 20 years, the ultra-hip, 19th-century downtown loft that housed the Franklin Furnace gallery has been replaced by a Web address: www.franklinfurnace.org.

In many ways, this makes sense. Especially when you consider Franklin Furnace's mission, as established by Founding Director Martha Wilson in 1976: "to serve artists who chose publishing as a primary, 'democratic' artistic medium, and were not being supported by existing artistic organizations." It's a mission that anticipated the Web itself, where anyone can "publish" or exhibit on his or her own dime.

The decision to close the physical gallery was also consistent with Franklin Furnace's progressive image. "Now, in 1997, the political, economic, spiritual, and philosophical climates have changed greatly since when I started Franklin Furnace," says Wilson. "In the 20 years that have passed, we've seen yesterday's avant-garde enjoy viable success.... Having 75 people come to the gallery and watch a performance or hosting 150 people dressed in black at an opening of a gallery exhibition are symbols of the past. I felt that to continue to be avant-garde, we had to experiment and try a different model."

Visitors to the Franklin Furnace Web site gallery can view the "Clip of the Month" QuickTime video of performance art, tour a 3-D gallery "space," and learn about the history of Franklin Furnace. An online forum, "U-B-D Judge," takes up the thorny issue of freedom of expression, asking its audience to discuss a Christian Action Network press release announcing the September 2, 1996, "funeral march for NEA" [National Endowment for the Arts]. Speaking from the steps of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., a CAN spokesperson had denounced Franklin Furnace's "Voyeur's Delight," a sexually explicit photography exhibit by Molly Blieden, which showed at the gallery last year.



The Virtual Furnace: A clean, well-lighted place for art.

Of course, risky pieces like "Voyeur's Delight" are mounted on the FF Web site. Wilson notes that Web exhibits can give clearer context to radical work–an artist's statement clarifying the goals, symbolism, and intended meaning of something that might otherwise seem pointlessly offensive. "The multimedia nature of the Web has provided a new level of art documentation that has never been achieved before," Wilson says.

Already, Wilson and Franklin's curators have begun developing programs that transcend the Web gallery approach. They plan to present simulcast Web broadcasts of performance art and encourage emerging artists to explore using the computer screen as a "two-dimensional canvas, a new media version of the flat painting."

And how has the Franklin Furnace community reacted to the Web-only gallery? "I commend Franklin Furnace's board of directors for their willingness to try this," Wilson says. "We agreed that as an avant-garde gallery, we are not here to be safe. We're here to experiment!" With NEA funding at risk, we might see a flurry of alternative galleries turning to the low-overhead cost of maintaining a Web page, rather than paying exorbitant Manhattan rent.

"The smart plan for alternative galleries now is to be their own NEAs," advises Wilson. "And why not just exist on the Web? Art can happen anywhere. A gallery could have the most beautiful blond hardwood floors, but that wouldn't guarantee the display of good, creative, challenging art." ■

__Reena Jana__ writes regularly for Flash Art, Wired, *and the* New York Times. *Send e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*

ART/DESIGN Sites | BY GLEN HELFAND

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

ARTISTS, MUSEUMS, GALLERIES

KEITH HARING

www.haring.com



NEW It makes perfect sense that the late Keith Haring—who made his first splash plastering New York City's subways with his graffiti art—now thrives on the public walls of cyberspace. This rich-hued site may have a slick corporate edge, but the artist's instantly recognizable line drawings (perfect for digital reproduction) are vibrantly represented here as fast-downloading flip-book animations, T-shirts, and games for kids. Many quotes from the artist himself are sprinkled throughout.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

NOK MUSEUM

harlemm.com/nokbeta

NEW As a rule, art from places like Africa is underrepresented on the Web, but the Nok Museum poses a splendid exception. Despite being an Internet-based art space, it's far more engaging than many of its real-world relatives. The Nok's crisp, stately design and elegant exhibitions make the content (art, forums, and publications) attractive both to scholars and to general audiences. A current exhibition is dedicated to masks, and future ones on the "portrayal of blacks in American art" and the "Splendors of Royal Benin" are scheduled. Some areas of the site are still under construction.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

HACKETT-FREEDMAN GALLERY

www.realart.com

NEW Hitting the gallery circuit online lets you avoid all the snootiness that comes with the black-turtlenecked, bad-eyeglass-wearing crowd. HFG puts a more accessible face on the experience. In addition to a primer on contemporary realism and info on exhibiting artists, this newly renamed San Francisco art space (formerly "Contemporary Realist Gallery") provides a lesson in art-viewing etiquette. Once you've completed the 30-minute course, you'll be poised to plunge into gallery banter with confidence.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

UFFIZI GALLERY

www.televisual.it/uffizi

NEW The Medici family tops the list of most famous patrons in art history, not least because they founded the Uffizi in Florence, Italy. After centuries of preservation brilliance, the gallery is now making a successful transition to cyberspace—though the effort requires some time and investment. In addition to artists' biographies and a glossary, you'll find downloadable full-color images—but first you must register (time-consuming but free) and wait for the password to come via e-mail. Bon voyage.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

SANDRA GERING GALLERY
www.users.interport.net/~gering

NEW What happens when three artists agree to disagree? They put together an intriguing new interactive online installation. In one case, Shockwave and a simple map-like interface are used to illustrate a conversation on a philosophical issue—better experienced than described. Other artists who show here present interactive projects that encourage artistic dialogs about minimalism and conceptual art. Sometimes these are dry and cerebral; sometimes they're very engaging. Schedules for the gallery's blast5drama performances are also posted.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

FASHION

PPP WEBTIE
www2.ppp.nl/ppp

NEW There's no clearer evidence that we live in the digital age than the design of the "PPP WebTie," which supplants the stalwart paisley with the @ sign. The accessory is available to international markets exclusively through this site, which also boasts handy knot-tying illustrations. The authors claim that, by wearing any of the five available WebTies, "Internet users will be able to recognize each other in daily life." Yeah, and what about the lady "Internet users"? Maybe a WebScarf?

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

MBA STYLE MAGAZINE
members.aol.com/mbastyle

A digital dress-for-success guide, this free zine offers sartorial wisdom to aspiring CEOs. Going beyond merely helping you select a winning power suit, it also offers tips on how to dress "for Sock-cess" and how to choose proper undie attire for job interviews. You'll encounter a necktie of the month, some live chats on boardroom etiquette, links to offsite career resources, and discount subscriptions to the *Wall Street Journal*.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

AND THE BRIDE WORE...
www.visi.com/~dheaton/bride/the_bride_wore.html

It's revenge of the wedding fashion nerds, as a recent bride posts a churchload of ridiculous matrimonial couture. Torn from pages of wedding magazines and snarkily captioned, And The Bride Wore... has opinions on everything from "flower abuse" to "dual-use wedding gowns." Not always on the mark, but the site does provide answers to the frequently asked question, "Dear Wedding Lady, My butt isn't big enough. How can I call attention to it?"

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

ONLINE GALLERY GUIDES

ART NOW GALLERY GUIDE
www.gallery-guide.com

NEW Art abounds, but where do you find it? This excellent gallery guide links you to international galleries, museums, art fairs, artist pages, auctions, and art consultants. You can search by name or geographic location, eventually homing in on gallery addresses, phone numbers, exhibits, and hours. You won't see any displays of art here: ANGG leaves that to the galleries and museums themselves.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

EDITOR'S CHOICE: SF STATION'S SFGALLERY

NEW San Francisco's art scene may play second banana to New York's, but sfgallery proves that San Fran is where Web designers create truly modern art. To get the optimal experience here, you'll need to download the RealVRTraveler and FlashPix—an unavoidable hassle. But you'll forget about the download time once you've entered the atrium—a space age portal to various virtual art shows. Here, you can zoom in, circle the room, and click on art pieces for artist bios, statements, and prices. The only things missing are the wine, the cheese, and the art fops.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5



www.sfstation.com/sfgallery

ART TEASE
www.jeddesign.com/arttease.htm

NEW Like an alternative art dealer's association, this page lumps together six of San Francisco's coolest and most esoteric galleries (among them New Langton Arts, Four Walls, ESP, and The Lab). Art Tease lists current shows and occasionally posts explanatory text or an archive of previous exhibitions. Design lives up to content here: The site is slick and arty in its own right. It's a great example of gorilla marketing and strength in numbers, getting the word out for some of San Francisco's finest art galleries.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

ARTIX
www.artix.com

NEW Artix hosts and designs spare, sleek, minimal Web sites for NYC–based galleries. The thin content and sparse links make you wonder whether the galleries represented are really ready to go digital to promote their artists. Still, Artix provides a quick survey of the SoHo scene, with a few intriguing art sites and artists' pages—especially one by Web-savvy artist Matthew Ritchie.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

HOME DESIGN

DESIGNWAVE
www.designwave.com

NEW Need a free pass to a good home-design trade show? Then check out Designwave, an online collective featuring interior decorators, architects, retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers, and artisans who promote goods from tables to tapestries. Sift through swatches of fine Italian floral fabrics from Sofabela, lend an ear and an eye to audio and video presentations from pro decorators, or join a chat forum on design. Industry news and reviews are also available in the E.Scape magazine section.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

DOMAIN
www.domain-home.com

NEW Ever wonder what your true home-decorating personality is? Find out by answering questions about your dream habitat (is it "warm, plush, sensual"?) in the Domain quiz. The East Coast–based Domain offers a plan of action for redecorating your humble abode, plus a newsletter and nationwide delivery of furniture and doodads. Graphics of cozy sofas, sleek armoires, and overstuffed beds act as inviting icons, making the "order now" urge hard to resist (yes, it's more catalog than decorating service).

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

EARTHSHIP
www.slip.net/~ckent/earthship

NEW Not the vehicle of choice for Heaven's Gate members, but a new breed of Eco-friendly earthbound homes made out of soda cans and used tires. Learn about designing and building a self-sustaining home of your own by studying the floor plans, pictures, and information on passive solar design and renewable energy included here. Knowing full well that the name would attract sci-fi seekers a plenty, the proprietors of Earthship instruct those seeking UFOs and aliens to look elsewhere.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

PHOTOGRAPHY

KIM STRINGFELLOW
www.planeteria.net/home/KimS

NEW As online portfolios go, Stringfellow's site is a giant step forward. Casting her photos in high Pantones with an Asian look and feel (and Asian music streaming in), Stringfellow reproduces pictures that first appeared in *Wired*, *Mondo 2000*, and *Health* magazine, plus portraits of rockers such as Cyndi Lauper and The Verve—plenty of retina-burning eye candy. Stringfellow's personal oeuvre is linked from this homepage, too, cataloging her neoclassical photographic constructions framed by an opulent design sensibility.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

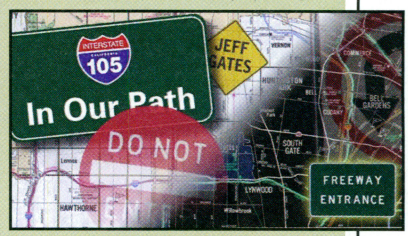
HAMISH REID
www.dnai.com/~hamish

NEW To judge from his information-rich, quasi-résumé home page, this photographer has opinions on everything: photo equipment, visual art, even how to drive in California. Of course, the blather would get dull fast if his images weren't so sharp and varied. In one section, he breaks down his portfolio by theme: West Berkeley, the London Tube, Body Parts, and "Things That Look Good." Elsewhere, there's a photo essay about Berkeley's People Park riots of 1991.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

IN OUR PATH
www.tmn.com/iop

NEW The concrete jungle never looked better. Photographer/writer/designer Jeff Gates underwent a kind of sustained highway hypnosis, producing a decade-long series of pictures of the Century Freeway in Los Angeles. "In Our Path" chronicles the homes bulldozed because they stood in the line of progress, as well as documenting the construction of the automotive artery and posting some fascinating before- and after-freeway photos. The polished, billboard-like design is well worth the toll of waiting for the heavy traffic of images to download.

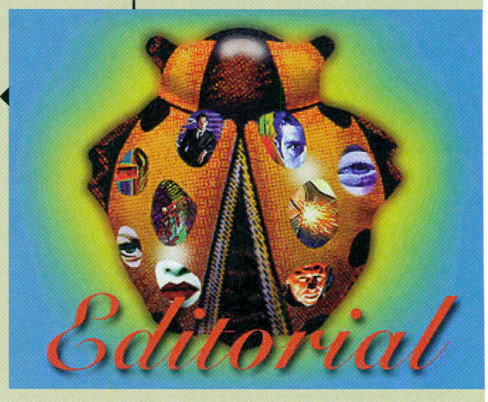


CONTENT 4 LINKS 2 DESIGN 5 OVERALL 4

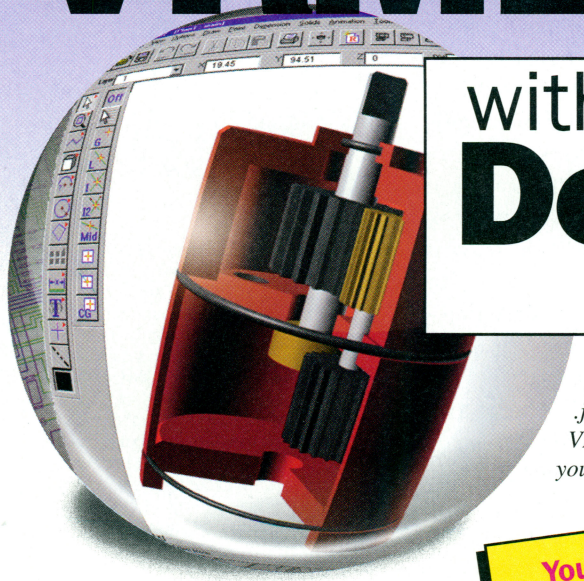
GHOST CITY
www-nmr.banffcentre.ab.ca/Artists/jody/GHOSTGRID.htm

NEW This digital ghost town evokes Stephen King's *Shining* as filtered through a mélange of French art theory and Jenny Holzer–style word montages. Taking the grid of urban planning to literal extremes, artist Jody Zellen's claustrophobic site flashes arrangements of looming skyscrapers, blurred city dwellers, and textual glut. The processed, photo-based images reflect modern life in chilly, carefully composed ways. It has its allure, but as in most big cities, you'll need street smarts to find your way around.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3



Create DAZZLING EFFECTIVE intriguing Impressive FLASHY STUNNING DETAILED VRML Images

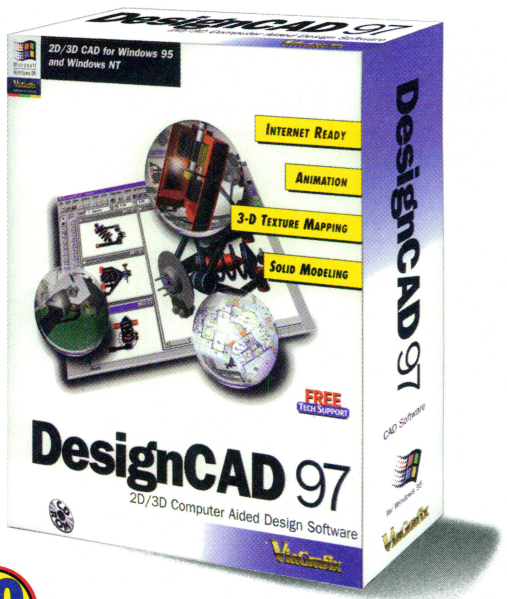


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BOOKS/MAGS | BY RICHARD OVERTON

Amazon Prepares for the Flood

Barnes & Noble wants to be your online bookstore

THIS PAST SPRING, Barnes & Noble crashed the online marketplace with all the courtesy of Dennis Rodman diving for a loose ball. The company's long-awaited Web site finally went live in mid-May, offering bestselling hardcovers at a 30% discount.

Opening an online store wasn't enough for B&N, though. The same week it set up shop on the Web, the company's lawyers sucker-punched its most successful online rival, Amazon.com. Tiny Amazon, which made its name by offering a million titles and discounting bestsellers by 40%, had chosen May to launch an initial public offering. But just as the Seattle-based company slipped into its quiet period—that SEC-mandated silence that gags companies while their IPOs hit the market—Barnes & Noble's lawyers slapped Amazon with a lawsuit. At issue: Amazon's tagline claim that it is "Earth's Biggest Bookstore." BarnesandNoble.com, you see, calls itself "The World's Largest Bookseller Online."

So who's right? Practically since its inception, Amazon has loudly touted its access to 1 million titles—coincidentally, the same number Barnesandnoble.com claims to sell. Strangely enough, this past spring Amazon upped its number to 2.5 million—1.5 million in-print titles, and 1 million out-.

Gagged by the SEC, Amazon couldn't defend itself in the court of public opinion. Barnes & Noble denies that the timing of the suit had anything to do with Amazon's IPO. In the end, Wall Street didn't seem to care either way. The younger company's stock opened on May 15 at $18 a share, almost one and a half times what was expected, netting the company $54 million in spending money and turning founder Jeff Bezos into yet another Internet millionaire.

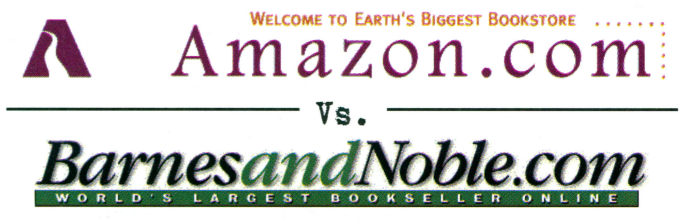
TOO EASY TO PLAY

But as the Amazon-vs.-B&N legal drama plays itself out in a New York court, a larger plot is beginning to unfold on the Web. "Borders will be online in 15 minutes. So will Crown, and so will Cody's, and so on," says Mike Shatzkin, who tracks the book retail business for his New York City firm, The Idea Logical Company. "Barnes & Noble and Amazon have all the headlines, but there's no way they can monopolize the game. It's just too easy to play."

To understand the game, you need to know about one of the biggest wholesalers in the book business, Ingram Book Company. Based in Nashville, Ingram buys videos, books, and magazines from publishers, stockpiles them in huge warehouses, and then distributes them to corner newsstands, mall bookstores, and almost every book outlet in between. "Anyone who does any amount of book business is a client," says Ingram's director of marketing, Neal Webb. Ingram's database lists about 370,000 titles, Webb says, and will increase to half a million titles by next year.

Amazon's site is essentially an elaborate front end to the Ingram database, from which it draws its most popular titles. (The balance come from a handful of other databases and out-of-print books lists.) It's an economical, low-overhead strategy. Which is why opening an online bookstore is one of the Net's easiest business opportunities. Throw a rock from Ingram's Nashville digs, for example, and you might hit the garage that incubated BookServe, started by Michael and David Mason—sons of a former Ingram Book Company president.

Ingram has noticed all the hubbub and spun off a division, Ingram Internet Support Services, to capitalize on the trend. That means more Amazons, each clamoring to sell you millions of books for as little as possible. Shatzkin argues that anyone with a URL and a handshake with Ingram will become a bookseller in the future. And with all those big, virtual storefronts out there, who do you think is going to remember which was the Earth's Biggest Bookstore and which was The World's Largest Bookseller Online? ■



THE SITES

BARNESANDNOBLE.COM
www.barnesandnoble.com
AMAZON.COM
www.amazon.com
BOOKSERVE
bookserve.com

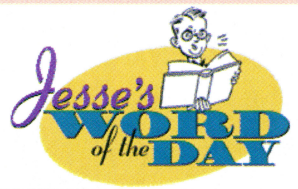
__Richard Overton__, a frequent contributor to THE WEB Magazine, *buys his books in San Francisco, Seattle, and New York. Send e-mail questions to postings@webmagazine.com.*

BOOKS/MAGS Sites | BY JOYCE SLATON

RATINGS GUIDE: **5** Bookmark It **4** Browse It **3** Click It **2** Consider It **1** Skip It

WORD PLAY

JESSE'S WORD OF THE DAY
www.randomhouse.com/jesse
NEW Ever wonder where the phrase "hands-down" came from? Just want to increase your word power? Then join the word lovers and autodidacts at Jesse's page. Editor Jesse Sheidlower makes a living contributing to *Webster's College Dictionary*. But when's the last time you saw scholarly explorations of the etymology of terms like "dis," "honky," and "ass over teakettle" in that venerable tome? Send your own grammar and word questions in for consideration, or just browse the archives.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5



WORDS OF LOVE
www.randomhouse.com/wordsoflove
NEW Schmaltzy or sarcastic, meltingly romantic or harshly misanthropic, these expressions of amour from such wits as Dorothy Parker, Marilyn Monroe, and Oscar Wilde cover both sides of the tender trap. Sure, it's all a shill for the Random House book of the same name. But the collection of innumerable and inimitable thoughts on love makes it a worthwhile destination. As Cynthia Heimel says "Get your tongue out of my mouth, I'm kissing you good-bye."
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

EXQUISITE CORPSE
www.speakeasy.org/~worden/xcorpse
NEW Surrealists used to while away the hours creating collaborative stories; participants would take turns contributing a sentence. The odd tales collected here—created by visitors (online and off-) to Seattle's Speakeasy Cafe—are worthy additions to the odd tradition. Contribute yourself or just check out the results: "Today, he decided, he would go hog wild. 'I've had it up to here with all this neo-quasi-deontological-nudist-anarcho-semi-Luddist-sino-polkaphilic-antifounda-tionalist-subnontriskadecatronic Glorious So-called Proletarian Ant Army,' he whispered suggestively into her ear."
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

RANDOM SHAKESPEARE CURSE GENERATOR
bvsd.k12.co.us/~tstone/curse.html
Four-letter words and the dispatching finger have their time and place, but if you really want to make your enemies quail, try unlimbering some good old-fashioned insults with that special Shakespearean ring. Imagine blasting reckless freeway drivers with "Thou cockered fool-born pantaloon!" or "Thou puking eye-offending malt-worm!" You'll have them scrambling for their *Cliff's Notes* and *OED*s instead of their Uzis.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3



If You Know What You're Doing, You Can Call Yourself Whatever You Want

Now, McGraw-Hill World University gives you a new way to prepare for an exciting, high-paying, Internet-related career — through a unique combination of texts, study guides, and online instruction.

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http://www.mhwu.edu
Or call 1-888-649-8648, Ext.2678

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SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY LITERARY TRIVIA CHALLENGE
www.mindspring.com/~jshock

NEW Mom was wrong when she said that those trashy sci-fi/fantasy novels were destroying your mind. How else would you know the name of the canyon Fafrhd ski-jumped over in Fritz Leiber's first book of the Fafrhd and Gray Mouser series? That and many more burning questions await you at this shrine to sci-fi/fantasy minutiae. You don't win anything, and you can't proudly post your initials. But for a fleeting moment you can feel like a superior being (this is fantasy after all).

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

FIRST LINES
pc159.lns.cornell.edu/firsts

NEW Quick, name the book that starts, "All children, except one, grow up." Test your literary smarts on this and hundreds of other first lines from famous novels. Excerpted authors range from Virginia Woolf to Robert Heinlein, and topic subdivisions include period classics, mysteries, and books from the '50s through '90s. (The answer: *Peter Pan* by J. M. Barrie.)

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

HORROR

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S HOUSE OF USHER
www.comnet.ca/~forrest

"The Raven" made Poe's name in 1845, and the creepy tales that followed (like the one that gave this site its name, "The Fall of the House of Usher") earned him a rep as a gloomy Gus gorecrow unhealthily fascinated by death and drink. This comprehensive tribute links to complete collections of Poe's work, naturally enough, and to bunches of other sites, featuring everything from scholarly essays to Poe-inspired comics.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

DARKECHO'S HORROR WEB
www.darkecho.com

NEW The things-that-go-bump-in-the-night set need look no farther than DarkEcho, a one-stop shop for all your horror lit needs. The free weekly e-mail newsletter is a snappy, informative read with interviews, reviews, and news from



the market; and the archives of horror reviews are swell. The buzz is getting out on DarkEcho's weekly Sunday night AOL conferences, reportedly a hot hangout for horror writers and fans.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

LITERATURE OF THE FANTASTIC
www.sff.net/people/doylemacdonald/lit.htm

NEW It's dry, it's plain, in fact it's pretty darn spartan. But this library of classic and rare horror tales will delight horror gourmets. The selection of vampire lit is particularly rich, including complete texts of Bram Stoker's *Dracula's Guest*, the lesbian-chic vampire classic *Carmilla*, and John Polidori's *The Vampyre*, said to be the earliest horror book ever.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 1 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

STEPHEN KING
www.careweb.com/king

Fittingly, Stephen King wrote *Carrie*, his first book, at night, after working his day job operating a laundry sheet press. That little bit of moonlighting started a publishing juggernaut—thirty novels, plus miscellaneous screenplays and novellas—that continues to roll to this day. This fan page can't match King's prolific output, but devotees will find plenty to like, such as short synopses of King's books (including works published under King's pseudonym, Richard Bachman) and movies, and a fawning interview.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

PC READING

HEATHER HAS TWO MOMMIES
www-swiss.ai.mit.edu/zoo/heather-has-two-mommies.html

The suppression of Leslea Newman's queer-friendly children's book *Heather Has Two Mommies* made headlines around the country and inspired this devilish spoof. Heather and her mommy, Crystal Spirit Wolfrunner (a woperson of noncolor) make an excursion to a rainforest education center (a.k.a. the zoo) for a satirical and scathing tour through basic PC concepts. Funny thing is, it's really just an elaborate excuse for the Webmaster to show off her collection of animal pictures.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS DECONSTRUCTED
www-swiss.ai.mit.edu/zoo/twelve-days.html

NEW You won't find maids a-milking or a partridge perched in a pear tree in this Christmas song. The classic Twelve Days of Christmas is now updated for the language-sensitive. The dairy laborers are "economically disadvantaged female persons stealing milk-products from enslaved Bovine-Americans," and the end-of-the-line partridge is a "Spotted Owl activist chained to an old-growth pear tree." Cute.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 1 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

ANGRY WOMEN

THE ANDREA DWORKIN WEB SITE
www.igc.org/Womensnet/dworkin

NEW Andrea Dworkin's controversial takes on pornography and hetero love endeared her to hard-line feminists, who rallied to her uncompromising views even as moderate feminists shrank from such Dworkinisms as "intercourse is rape." Get the Dworkin take on feminism here, with a learned, reasoned FAQ and a comprehensive library of excerpts from books, speeches, and stories.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

FAT GIRL
www.fatgirl.com/fatgirl

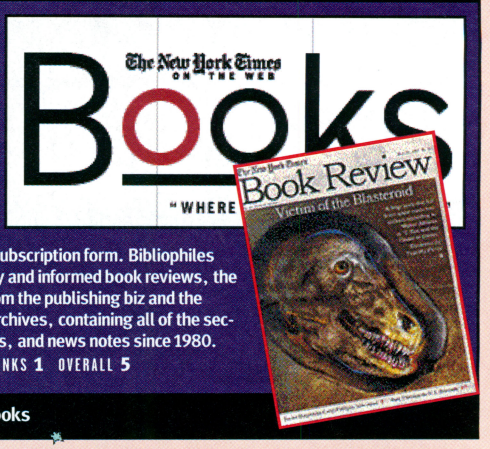
NEW In less capable hands, FaT GiRL ("the zine for fat dykes and the women who want them") would have devolved into a self-deprecating joke or a bleeding-heart plea for the end of fat oppression. Instead, the editors have turned out a fearless, funny, scathing take on fat hatred in society, with interviews, media criticism, stories, poetry, and other entertaining food for thought. Content ranges from

EDITOR'S CHOICE: THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOKS

NEW Online *NY Times* readers have long bemoaned the absence of the paper's essential books section, missing since the Gray Lady emerged on the Web. Those complainers can now rejoice! Times Books is up, running, and available to anyone who completes the free subscription form. Bibliophiles will slaver over the savvy and informed book reviews, the daily updates of news from the publishing biz and the unbelievably thorough archives, containing all of the section's reviews, interviews, and news notes since 1980.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

www.nytimes.com/books



the ribald (for instance, unflinching instructions on bathroom cleanliness for the space-challenged) to the practical (e.g., a directory



of legal resources directed toward fat kids).

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

KATHY ACKER
acker.thehub.com.au/acker2.html

In the early '90s, Acker's bad-girl stories and rebel posturing screamed cool to the post-feminist grrl scene, and a media darling was born. This fan tribute is every bit as impenetrable as Acker's prose and just as slickly hip. You could be dead and buried before the opening graphics download; but wait them out and you'll find excerpts from such Acker works as *Blood and Guts in High School*, plus many, many links to criticism, interviews, and other Ackerisms.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

OTHER AUTHORS

MARK TWAIN RESOURCES ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB
web.syr.edu/~fjzwick/twainwww.html

More than a hundred years after they first saw print, Mark Twain's dead-on satires remain unequaled. Which may explain why three times more sites are devoted to Twain and his work than to such modern literati as Michael Crichton. MTRWWW doesn't have much original material; but when the links are this good, who cares? Connect to Twain criticism, complete catalogs of his work, even an entire exhaustive section detailing his influence on modern pop culture. The neato frames design makes even this frames-hater change her tune.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

PO BRONSON'S "THE FIRST $20 MILLION IS ALWAYS THE HARDEST"
members.aol.com/pobronson/hardest.htm

NEW Po Bronson's Ryan O'Neal-ish good looks are generating almost as many waves in the publishing industry as his hilarious fictional exposé of the inside workings of Silicon Valley. But in Bronson's case, substance is not overwhelmed by style. His site presents a meaty and clever compendium of book info and excerpts, background on his Silicon Valley research, and other quirky odds and ends like the *$20 Million* tale told as a Merchant-Ivory Hugh Grant vehicle.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT
xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/ALCOTT/LWHP.html

NEW Louisa May Alcott's classic *Little Women* has made more kid readers cry than *Old Yeller*, *Andersen's Fairy Tales*, and *Bambi* put together. Several generations of girls have read about irrepressible Jo, stalwart Meg, vain Amy, and fragile Beth—the four "little women" of the novel's title—growing up in a New England town in the 1800s. *Little Women* and other classics have immortalized Alcott. But her life as a suffragist, poet, nurse, and author is almost as fascinating as her stories—and considerably less familiar to her fans.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

WILLIAM BURROUGHS
www.hyperreal.com/wsb

NEW The loosest of all literary loose cannons is all over the Web; Burroughs admiration sites are almost as common online as *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode guides. In addition to a complete bibliography, filmography, and discography, you'll find links to more esoteric stuff (such as a list of rock bands who took their names from Burroughs' work). Additional photos and book excerpts would be nice, but Webmaster Malcolm Hulmes leaves that to more mundane sites.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3



BY YAEL LI-RON

Virtual Vaccination

Relax: Web viruses aren't as dangerous as the old-fashioned ones—yet



CATHY SAKSA

USED TO BE, we could all agree about what a computer virus was: a highly infectious program that duplicates itself across different systems, ultimately damaging software and data. But 15 years into the PC era, the Internet has changed the definition. We now have a new breed of rogue programs labeled as viruses, in addition to the scary old ones.

The new baddies, called "hostile Java applets" and "misbehaved ActiveX controls," capitalize on the vulnerability of Web browsers. In theory, when you visit a site that has one of these doodads, you expose your computer (and personal data) to snoops and high-tech terrorists looking to swipe your social security number or wipe out your hard drive.

The Java language, for example, may not let programmers write true viruses that attack your hard disk, but it does allow hard-disk snooping. And ActiveX is even more permissive. ActiveX instructions can be as simple as a batch file (a command) that any baboon with a copy of *DOS for Dummies* can write. In fact, a batch file that contains a one-liner such as "DELTREE/Y" (a quick-and-dirty DOS command for removing an entire directory and its contents) can cause more damage than most viruses. And those Netscape plug-ins are disasters waiting to happen since they are really just programs launching off your browser.

But truth be told, not a single offending Java applet or ActiveX control has been known to do any damage. Translation: Chill out. You've got enough to worry about without fretting over hypothetical Web bogeymen.

That's not to say you shouldn't protect yourself from those good old-fashioned computer viruses, some of which might be hiding in files you download from the Internet. Those things are nasty. The all-too-common boot-sector virus, for instance, traditionally transmitted via floppy disks (remember those?), can destroy data or keep your computer from booting up. Another common viral infiltrator, the "macro virus," attaches itself to a Word or Excel template where macros are stored and spreads the infection when users share documents. You don't really lose anything, but you do get harassed by dialog boxes that do nothing—persistently annoying.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

The easiest way to avoid viruses is to scan each document or program you're about to download from the Net and each disk you insert in your system. A memory-based virus-scanning utility is the best safeguard, because it constantly monitors your system; if you even try to see the contents of an infected disk, it'll warn you and block the virus. Remember: 20 or so new viruses are discovered *every week*, though most of them are well-contained in research labs and never sink their teeth into your data. The ones you want to worry about are those still "in the wild" (in wide distribution).

Determining the best antivirus program might be harder than reinstalling a hard drive. A slew of companies—including McAfee, Symantec, Dr. Solomon, Touchstone, and Trend Micro—offer products that can bodyguard your system. All perform similar functions (identifying known viruses and protecting against unknown ones) with friendly interfaces, and all claim that their competitors are flawed. Don't pay attention to vendor hype. The truth is, every one of 'em is just fine.

My favorite antivirus software, however, is McAfee's VirusScan, though many people prefer Symantec's Norton Anti-Virus or PC-cillin by Touchstone. It's a question of habit. I've been using McAfee's product for over a decade, and I'm used to it. Luckily, you can download trial versions of these products from their respective sites, and then decide whether you want to buy them or try others. Once you've installed an antivirus product, however, you can't sit still. You have to upgrade it often (monthly, in some cases), since only the most recent versions detect the latest viruses.

Don't want to download? Just visit the HouseCall site for free online scans of your hard drive.

Unfortunately, some destructive programs can outwit antivirus programs. Trojan Horses, for example—impostors that purport to be one thing but end up eating your data after you've downloaded and installed them—can sneak past even the best protection. One of the most notorious of the Trojan Horses is PKZ300.EXE (also known as PKZIP300.EXE), which victims mistake for version 3.0 of the popular PKZIP utility. But PKZIP's last version was 2.5.

So these "other" versions are really scams perpetrated by juvenile meanies to steal or destroy your data. Best advice for avoiding Trojan Horses: Download files only from reputable sources. And back up your data often, just to be safe.

Some pranksters would rather waste your time than destroy your stuff. So instead of sending actual viruses out into the world, they simply send *reports* of viruses. The most notorious false alarm is a widely distributed piece of e-mail warning about Good Times, a virus that doesn't exist. The message urges people not to read any e-mail whose subject lines contain the words "Good Times"; if recipients foolishly open a Good Times message, a virus hidden inside it will destroy their data. Truth be told, that's like catching a cold by watching someone sneeze on TV. There's no such critter as an e-mail virus.

Still, you'd be surprised how many people have bought into this puerile prank. Millions since 1994. And each has conscientiously forwarded the "warning" message to others. And then they each told two friends. You get the idea.

Of course, messages *can* carry attachments that are malicious files. But you won't risk anything by opening or reading them; it's only when you download those files and run them that you're in trouble. Bottom line: Practice paranoia judiciously. But don't lose sleep over viruses. Just get a simple antivirus utility, sit back, and let the Good Times roll.

THE SITES

MCAFEE
www.mcafee.com
DR SOLOMON'S
www.drsolomon.com
SYMANTEC CORPORATION
www.symantec.com
TOUCHSTONE
www.checkit.com
PC-CILLIN HOUSECALL
housecall.antivirus.com

Yael Li-Ron *is senior online editor for* PC World *and a regular contributor to* THE WEB Magazine. *Send e-mail comments and questions to postings@webmagazine.com.*

COMPUTERS Sites

BY ARIES PESCADO & BELINDA CHOI

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: BUSINESSWEEK COMPUTER ROOM

NEW **A must-bookmark for seekers of hard techy news, BusinessWeek's editors organize a year's worth of the magazine's computer industry news and add updated columns and articles. Columnist Steve Wildstrom covers such wide-ranging topics as multifunction devices, MMX, and high-tech ads in pop culture (titled "Cars, Beer, and Web Browsers"). Finally, an interactive guide to computer buying called Maven helps you pick the best new system, notebook, modem, printer, or monitor for your needs, by providing clear readable comparisons of chip speed, price, and other specs. Best of all, BWCR packages all of this information with a welcome dose of attitude (one representative headline reads: "The PC Biz: The Wintel side of the industry (is there any other? just kidding)").**

CONTENT 5
DESIGN 4
LINKS 1
OVERALL 5

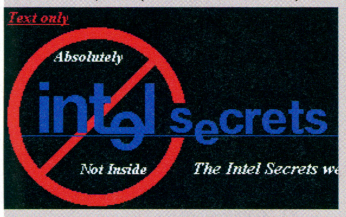


www.businessweek.com/tocs/computer.htm

PUNDITS/GOSSIPS

INTEL SECRETS
www.x86.org

NEW Conspiracy nut or keeper of the flame of truth? Robert Collins has devoted his life to revealing all the gory (and often undocumented) details about Intel's processors. Remember the Pentium math bug? Heard about the glitches in the latest Pentium IIs? Collins will tell you all about them, in excruciating detail. You'll find news articles, reams of Intel documentation, and (when the links work) the



convoluted story of Collins' stormy relationship with one of the most powerful companies in the world.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 3 OVERALL 5

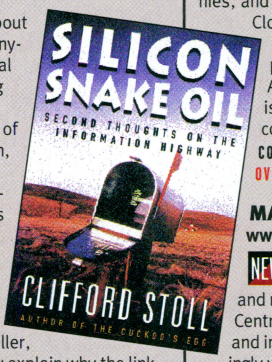
PAULALLEN.COM
www.paulallen.com

He's a self-made billionaire and the cofounder of Microsoft. He owns a basketball team and several Web sites, and he invests in a few charity organizations and computer companies. Now, Paul Allen rounds out his holdings with his own personal Web page, where he can explain his investment strategies, current interests, and philanthropic philosophy. The site describes and links to all the companies that Mr. Allen controls—Asymetrix, CINET, DreamWorks, N2K, Starwave, Trilobyte, the Portland Trailblazers, Ticketmaster, etc.—and posts personal information (like his hobbies). In this day and age, we're surprised at how few techno-celebrities maintain personal Web pages.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

CLIFF STOLL'S HOME PAGE
www.OCF.Berkeley.EDU/~stoll

NEW Internet spy hunter, devil's advocate, and resident ranter on MSNBC's *The Site*, Clifford Stoll is too busy complaining about the Internet to put anything very substantial into this fairly boring Web site. But who needs another page of puffy self-promotion, anyway? Stoll does offer useful information about his books (most recently, *Silicon Snake Oil*) and posts a calendar of his speaking engagements. He's not a great speller, however, which may explain why the link to his own astronomy papers didn't work.



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 1 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

STUPID COMPUTER TRICKS

AQUARIA BY JIM
www.ionet.net/~jlower/aquarium.html

NEW What do you do with your antiquated Mac? Use it as a doorstop? Hope it becomes a valuable antique someday? If you're Jim, you make an aquarium out of it. No, not the screensaver type—we're talking live fish, baby! Rip out the computer's innards, put in a little Plexiglas, and voilà, you've got a home for



geeky fish. Think of the hours and hours of fun... well, at least they look cool. Jim provides instructions and insights based on the "Macquariums" he's made out of a Mac 512kE, an Apple Lisa, a Lisa II, and an Apple monitor.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

JUDY'S RAT
www.judyrat.com

NEW Start worrying: Here's a rat that's more wired than you are. Dr. Judy Reavis of Benicia, California, trained her rat to lay cable through hard-to-reach places, a talent it demonstrated on Net Day. Judy's rat is now the favorite Web guru of the playground set. The storybook-like look and feel of the JR site might induce the gag reflex, but where else can you hear a rat (yeah, right) give Internet advice and sing a song?

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

CHIP SHOTS
micro.magnet.fsu.edu/chipshot.html

NEW Interested in the inner U—as in CPU? Aim your browser to Chip Shots for photomicrographs (photographs taken through a microscope) of the inside of your favorite processor. The photos are intriguing, suggesting cheesy psychedelic art more than anything else. Scrutinize photomicrographs of beer, steroids, ice cream, and soft drinks, too.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

MACINTOSH

MACTIP OF THE WEEK
www.themacintoshguy.com

NEW One nice guy from Portland, Oregon, helps millions of Mac fans. No big news, just a handy, personal page from the Macintosh Guy, offering weekly tips plus links to recommended online Mac-zines and resources, Mac-related companies, and a whole section (called the Closet) where he offers to resell odd items like keyboards and printers that he has lying around. All in all, MacTip of the Week isn't a bad way for a computer consultant to advertise.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

MACCENTRAL
www.maccentral.com

NEW The Macintosh will never die as long as it lives in the hearts and minds of true believers like MacCentral's staff, who offer daily news and impassioned editorial. The seemingly volunteer staff runs this comprehensive yet homey site, which includes links to other online Mac resources and a testimonial from Apple's Gil Amelio. A few ads dot the site, but it definitely looks like a labor of love.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

MACNN
www.macnn.com

Ugly on a PC but beautiful on a Macintosh, this Mac news site covers all the basics (Apple news, recent releases, beta products, key Web sites), organizing the information chronologically and posting daily updates. Archives are maintained for the preceding five months of news. A few problems do remain, however, and some of these—the ubiquitous typos, for example—can't be blamed on any PC–Mac incompatibilities.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

NOT WINTEL

NEWTEK TELEVISION
www.newtek.com

NEW Hot TV shows like *Babylon 5* and *Hercules* owe some of their whiz-bang effects to Video Toaster, a low-cost computer graphics solution that still runs only with the Commodore Amiga (the company died, but the hardware lives on). Hardcore computer animators visit this mecca to read about upcoming improvements to various products including Toaster and Lightwave, company news,

products for sale (including T-shirts), and links to dealers, users, and developers.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

THE LINUX HOME PAGE
www.linux.org

NEW Next time Windows 95 crashes on you (that should be any minute now), don't go crawling back. Flip off Bill and his Redmond empire by downloading their worst nightmare—a free operating system. In this case it's Linux, a public-domain version of Unix. Unfortunately it's not for the technically faint of heart, and you can't play most of your favorite games on it. But that hasn't stopped its loyal fans from producing newsletters and newsgroups devoted to the geekiest of computer platforms.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

AMD @ WORK
www.amd.com

NEW Until recently, Intel rival AMD was probably best-known for the hedonistic behavior of its CEO, Jerry Sanders. There's no such excitement on its Web site, but if you're interested in the company's ongoing rivalry with Intel—particularly now that AMD's new K6 chip makes it worth considering, pay a visit here. You'll get all the AMD news, reviews, FAQs, job openings, and merchandise you'd expect—and absolutely nothing else.
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

CYRIX
www.cyrix.com

NEW Cyrix, the Rodney Dangerfield of chipmakers, garners even less publicity than Intel's other major rival, AMD. Not surprisingly, Cyrix's Web site is pretty low-key. Besides hyping its own products, the company posts job listings, Cyrix-compatible games, and general press releases. No hidden treasures, but no major disappointments either.



CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

GEEK HUMOR

THE DILBERT ZONE
www.dilbert.com

Show me one computer professional who doesn't chuckle when reading the *Dilbert* comic strip, and I'll show you a teenager who's not concerned about acne. This overworked, underappreciated geek anti-hero represents the tortured, frustrated employee in all of us. The Dilbert Zone contains archives of the wildly popular strip, resources relating to cartoonist Scott Adams, links to further information and books, "Dilbert's Daily Mental Workout," and instructions on how you can get *Dogbert's New Ruling Class*, the Dilbert newsletter.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

WINDOWS 95 AND MAC JOKE WALLPAPER
www.jokewallpaper.com

Want to spruce up your computer? Add graphics from the *Bill Gates Quarterly*, the "Carpal Tunnel This Exit" logo, or any of numerous other parodies and gags on the Joke Wallpaper site—irreverent boot-up and shut-down screens and screensavers, links to similar Web sites, megabytes of satire, and a Not So Serious FAQ. Better yet, sabotage a coworker's system!
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

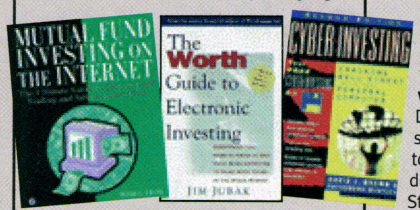
PRODUCTIVITY OF THE NET
homepage.seas.upenn.edu/~ghinkle/fun.shtml

NEW Ever wonder where those humorous e-mails your coworkers forward to you come from? Or where they go to die a peaceful death? Visit this graveyard of wasted bandwidth to relive such classics as "Microsoft to buy [blank]," and "Dogs and Men compared" (hey, my dog resents that!), and myriad Top 10 lists. Good for a chuckle even if you've seen everything on the site many times before.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

BOOKS/MAGS/ZINES

AMAZON.COM – COMPUTER AND INTERNET BOOKS
www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/computer/computer.html

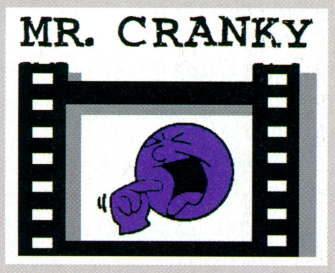
NEW Your local Barnes & Noble sold its last copy of *The Visual Tcl Handbook*? Gotta have the latest *Postscript Language Reference Manual*? Struggling to find *AOL for Dummies*? If it's a book about computing, chances are you'll find it at Amazon's Web site—and heavily discounted at that (40% off select books when we logged on). You'll find synopses, descriptions, pictures of covers, and Books of the Day, all organized by category. If you can't locate it by browsing, the fast search engine should help.



CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE SITE
www.thesite.com

NEW The high snickertainment value of the drooly messages sent to Soledad O'Brien—photogenic anchor of this Web/TV melding—is one good reason to visit *The Site*'s ultra-cool homepage. But you'll want to stay for *The Site*'s feature stories (like the profile of high-tech concierges), its interviews (with people like Marimba's Kim Polese), and, best of all, its free-rein pundits. Cliff Stoll posts paeans to the oscilloscope; Mr. Cranky offers in-character opinions of Web sites, movies, and pretty much anything else he chooses; and Sal and Stef actually supply useful information and links.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

PC MAGAZINE ONLINE
www.pcmagazine.com

NEW The fat biweekly print version of *PC Magazine* is chock-full of graphs, comparison charts, and acronyms—and so is the Web site. Like its paper counterpart, the PC Mag section of the mammoth ZDNet has info galore. Even better are the links, the speedy search engine, and the archives from prior issues. The Java-enabled charts are cool, too, though they take forever to load. Better than the print version? Well, you can't store PCMO in your bathroom or read it on a plane (yet), but on the other hand, it's free. It's also surprisingly dynamic for such a geek paradise publication.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

HTML/DESIGN

PURSUING PAGE PUBLISHING
www.links.net/webpub

"You are about to be let in on a big secret: HTML IS AS EASY AS HELL!" Take it from Justin, a Web designer with attitude. Justin walks you through the steps involved in setting up your own homepage, from getting an Internet service provider and registering a domain to making money off the Web. Justin's most important piece of advice: "Work on it every day." Novices in particular will appreciate PPP's irreverence and humor.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

RESOURCES FOR WEB GODDESSES
www.women-online.com/web/web-resources.html

Don't let the title mislead you: This site can help wannabe Web Gods, too. Webmaster Amy Goodloe, a Web designer and critic, offers her "5 Steps Toward Web Goddess Status," emphasizing appreciation of color and knowledge of your target audience. Design tools (such as image libraries), articles by other writers, a comprehensive list of book reviews, and other links organized by category are particularly valuable.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

HTML: AN INTERACTIVE TUTORIAL FOR BEGINNERS
www.davesite.com/webstation/html

Okay, we cheated on this HTML tutorial, because we got tired of typing the same tags over and over. Isn't that what HTML editors are for? But if you want to do it the old-fashioned way—and thereby gain more control over how your pages look—this site shows you how. Webmaster Dave not only covers all the HTML conventions, but offers unexpected tips, like how to name files when uploading your site, legal dos and don'ts, and links to search engine submission pages.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

COMPUTER HISTORY

THE OBSOLETE COMPUTER MUSEUM
www.ncsc.dni.us/fun/user/tcc/cmuseum/cmuseum.htm

NEW It wasn't a job, it was an adventure! In the '70s and '80s, personal computing was a hobby, a passion, a geeky obsession, and way more fun. To find out why—or just to put the personal computer industry into perspective—take a look at the amateurish exhibits here. An Altair 8800? Binary readouts? The Coleco ADAM? Plus great links to computer clubs and fans of the various machines.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4



BOB'S COMPUTER MUSEUM
swift.eng.ox.ac.uk/rjm/museum/museum.html

NEW Remember the days when PC stood for "personal computer" and not a Wintel (Windows-Intel) box? Nostalgia addicts should bop over to this site at Oxford University, which preserves the heritage of the early days of computing. This includes old-school names like Tandy, Atari, Commodore, and Digital, as well as original Macs and IBM PCs and obscurities like the PDP-8 (dip switches and LEDs). The collection is missing a couple of milestones (check out The Obsolete Computer Museum for these), but it does have a couple of English PCs not found elsewhere.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

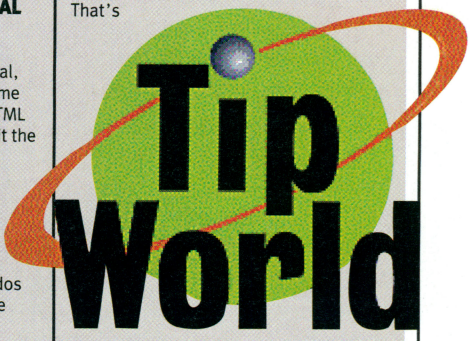
MISCELLANY

BROWSERS.COM
www.download.com/Browsers

NEW Attention, CINET shoppers! Your favorite one-stop Web site for computer news, games, and shareware now caters to browser fanatics by offering every known version of Netscape and Internet Explorer, rarer birds like HotJava, Ariadna, and Cello, and a passel of plug-ins. You'll also find news, reviews, and browser tips and tricks from CINET editors. Reliable and trustworthy.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

TIPWORLD
www.tipworld.com

NEW The pitch: "Imagine Jenny McCarthy or Chris O'Donnell sitting on your lap whispering sweet tips in your ear. Now imagine that Jenny or Chris are computer experts!
That's TipWorld!" The reality: Ad-supported geek advice e-mailed daily. At least the price is right: $0.00. Most of the links point to the online version of *PC World*, TipWorld's parent company (both owned by IDG—which also owns *THE WEB Magazine*), but who cares about a little nepotism when you can get free tips?



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

PRICESCAN
www.pricescan.com

NEW Before you buy new hardware or software, you wanna know you're getting the best value. PriceScan just made your comparison shopping easier—but not perfect. Choose a product category and select parameters from drop-down lists; PriceScan sends back a list of advertised prices from publications and catalogs (indicating date of publication), and supplies the related URLs or phone numbers. Though the database covers many major vendors, it ain't comprehensive, raising the question of how products made the cut. Mac users: Expect an even sparser list.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

BY MICHAEL GOODWIN

Hong Kong Takes Hollywood

Action flick junkies get their kicks first online

WITH THE DRAMATIC IMPACT of a board-splitting karate chop, Hong Kong cinema is breaking into Hollywood. And it's happening as fast as one of John Woo's pyrotechnic, ultra-violent, bullet-creased shoot-outs, or Jackie Chan's comical, acrobatic kung fu battles. *Face/Off*, Woo's new flick starring John Travolta and Nicolas Cage, is poised to kick summer box-office butt. And Chan's becoming as reliable as Clint Eastwood at generating huge international grosses and profitable video store rentals. *People* magazine recently tabbed Michelle Yeoh (Chan's co-star in *Supercop*) as one of the 50 Most Beautiful People In the World. And *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* directed by the latest Hong Kong sensation, Peter Chan, recently grabbed ten prizes at the San Francisco International Film Festival.

HOLLYWOOD OR BUST?

With worldwide attention focused on Hong Kong's takeover by the mainland Chinese government, the city itself is becoming as big a media star as its famous filmmakers. Initially, observers thought that actors and directors—like other business people—might flee to more democratic locales, but the industry exodus hasn't happened. Sure, huge stars like Jackie Chan and John Woo are working in Hollywood, but that's nothing new. For nearly a century, anyone in the film biz who *could* has made that move. After all, Hollywood is the Big Time.

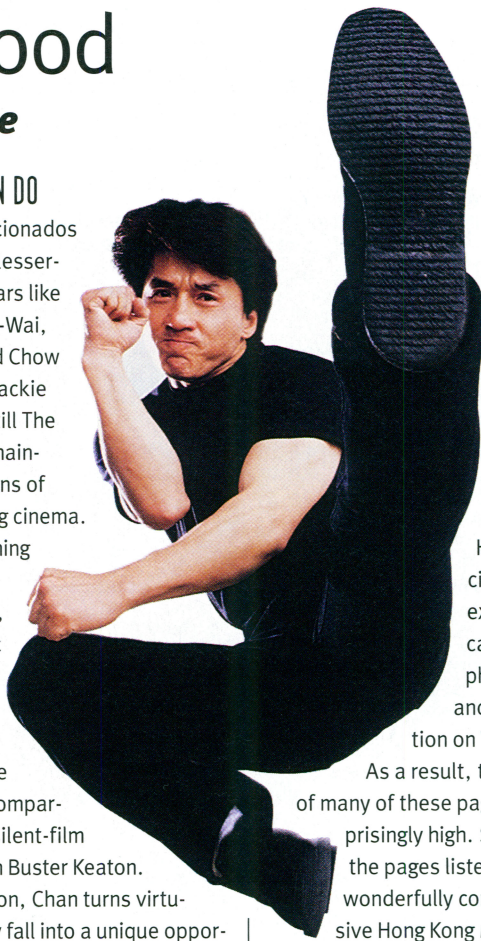
But smaller filmmakers like Peter Chan say they're still high on Hong Kong (though Chan is considering a stateside directing project). The young director believes Hong Kong's movie industry is going to thrive once the 1997 hand-off is complete. "People who want to go have gone," he said recently. "People who want to stay are looking at the future."

Nor is Chan worried about censorship. "The Hong Kong film industry has never been political," he notes, "so there's nothing to be censored."

Despite where its filmmakers are working, Hong Kong's cinematic influence on Hollywood is growing. Twenty years ago, if you had asked a random collection of North American movie fans about Hong Kong cinema, most of them would have stared at you blankly; hipsters might have mentioned Bruce Lee. These days, thanks to a series of profitable crossover films like Jackie Chan's *Rumble In the Bronx* and John Woo's *Broken Arrow,* Hong Kong actors and filmmakers are featured in *Entertainment Weekly*, on David Letterman, at prestigious film festivals, along the busiest aisles of hometown video stores, and across a staggering collection of Web sites.

Traditional Hong Kong action films feature a unique combination of breathtaking martial arts, folklore, barnyard comedy, outrageous stunts, and tough women who can take care of themselves—elements that the genre's filmmakers and stars combine at breakneck speed. More recently, director John Woo's "heroic bloodshed" style has moved these action-adventures into contemporary settings with gunplay, gangsters, and cops. And artful auteurs like Peter Chan round out the mix—and broaden the appeal—by adding stylistic elegance to tales of fate and romance.

CHAN CAN DO



While aficionados embrace lesser-known stars like Wong Kar-Wai, Jet Li, and Chow Yun Fat, Jackie Chan is still The Man for mainstream fans of Hong Kong cinema. His charming onscreen presence, cinematic genius, and daring stunt work have elicited comparisons to silent-film comedian Buster Keaton. Like Keaton, Chan turns virtually every fall into a unique opportunity for acrobatic comedy. He's also famous for performing all his own stunts, risking life and limb for his art. To prove (and parade) it, he shows us the outtakes under the end credits. How can you not love a guy like that?

Longtime fans prize Chan's classic films (*Police Story*, *Drunken Master*, etc.), but recent outings like *Rumble* and *First Strike* have made him bankable. The hostage thriller *Rush Hour*, due out next year, will surely up the ante.

Despite the growing media attention, however, it's difficult to get timely news about these films and filmmakers unless your Chinese is good enough to read Hong Kong industry pubs and/or Chinese language newspapers.

Or unless you surf the Net. There's a huge amount of Hong Kong film information in cyberspace, thanks mostly to the genre's devoted fan following. Action film groupies share information about Hong Kong cinema by extensively cataloging photographs and information on Web sites. As a result, the quality of many of these pages is surprisingly high. Start with the pages listed on the wonderfully comprehensive Hong Kong Movie Links site, and go from there. You'll find a virtual sea of Jackie Chan fan sites awash with photos, filmographies, and amateur film criticism. Be sure to check out the interviews with Chan (some in RealAudio) available in online zines like Mr. Showbiz.

WOOING AMERICAN FILMGOERS

By the time John Woo (real name: Wu Yu-Sum) came to America in 1992, he'd been a pivotal filmmaker in Hong Kong for over two decades, with no fewer than 26 films notched on his holster. Over-the-top flicks like *The Killer, Hard Boiled, Bullet in the Head,* and *A Better Tomorrow* made Woo a cinematic cult hero. And it's easy to see why. He offers something for everyone. Action junkies get off on his films balletic barrages of bullets, and aesthetes tune in for Woo's pure cinematic sensibility.

EVERETT COLLECTION

Woo's directorial vision shows the influence of French filmmakers Jean-Pierre Melville and Jean-Luc Godard. In turn, Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* is unthinkable without the inspiration of Woo. That skillful blend of high-voltage action and character-driven stories drew Christian Slater and John Travolta to work on Woo's *Broken Arrow* in 1996, and that film's success got Woo the go-ahead for the upcoming *Face/Off*. His star is rising fast.

In cyberspace, Woo's not as popular as Jackie Chan is, but he's getting there. The site for *The Killer* includes fabulous photos, director's notes, and info on the stars. Twentieth Century Fox has a mediocre *Broken Arrow* site, but it couldn't have matched the film's brilliance, anyway. Paramount's *Face/Off* site was still in the works when we last checked.

If you're not already a fan and want to check out some of these thrill-a-minute movies for yourself, bookmark the page for Tai Seng Video Rentals, the largest distributor of Hong Kong films on laser disc and video in the U.S.

As hardcore fans know, Hollywood's production values may be better and its soundtracks slicker, but those sometimes-funky, low-budget Chinese originals deliver the hottest, highest-energy action. So while some filmmakers are following their fortunes into the arms of Hollywood, you can count on many more years of the real deal—direct from Hong Kong. ■

THE SITES

HONG KONG MOVIE LINKS
casa.colorado.edu/~kachun/hkdenver.html
THE KILLER
www.hardnet.co.uk/madeinhongkong/killer.html
BROKEN ARROW
www.brokenarrow.com/brokenarrow
FACE/OFF
www.face-off.com
HONG KONG FILM CRITICS
zero.com.hk/filmcritics/homeT.html
TAI SENG VIDEO RENTALS
www.taiseng.com

Michael Goodwin *is a contributing editor for* THE WEB Magazine. *Send e-mail comments and questions to postings@webmagazine.com.*

FILM Sites | BY MICHAEL GOODWIN

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: AUSTIN POWERS

NEW Austin Powers is an international man of mystery—and a New Line comedy that stars Mike Myers. This slick site radiates hot pink, everything blinks and flashes, and weird music abounds. Plenty for the sexually obsessed, too, including a game where you try to grab a Fembot breast, and special sections called Shag Time and Orgy of Evil. Don't miss the lethal sex kittens in (hot) pink satin who cry themselves to sleep every night.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4



www.austinpowers.com

HISTORY

W. C. FIELDS "THE GREAT MAN"
www.louisville.edu/~kpraybo1/WC.html
W. C. Field's onscreen persona—a fancy-talking, fast-moving, sometimes lovable con man—has been admired for decades, which is a testament to his immense talent. This definitive site includes everything from an article on Fields' early career as a juggler to a filmography, a list of video sources, and a huge collection of quotes. ("Marriage is better than leprosy, because it's easier to get rid of.")
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

SILVER SCREEN SIREN WEBSITE
users.deltanet.com/users/dstickne
NEW From Liz Taylor to Lizabeth Scott, Veronica Lake to Brigitte Bardot, this picture-packed photo site boasts close to 100 image galleries, mainly devoted to "classic" stars rather than to the current crop of silicone starlets. Don't expect biographies or filmographies; but even at a conservative calculation, these pictures (including movie posters) are worth close to a million words.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

KINOVILLE
www.infinet.com/~fwylie
Fascinated by primeval motion picture equipment? Obsessed by vintage movie makeup? Then this incredible silent movie site has your name subtitled all over it. You'll find fabulous information on film collecting resources, motion picture theaters, and film preservation; a great chapter on movie makeup from a book written in 1925; an illustrated rundown of how "nitrate motion picture film" was manufactured; and even a section on the inner workings of silent cameras and projectors, with animated diagrams!
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

THE OBITUARY PAGE
catless.ncl.ac.uk/Obituary/theatre.html
If you like to keep track of who's faded to black, headstone—er, bookmark—the Obituary Page. Starting in 1994, celebs' deaths are listed for each year in such categories as movies and theater, literature, politics, sports, and science. A list of death hoaxes is amusing but needs to be expanded: Currently the only inductees are Paul McCartney and Robert Anton Wilson. Some names are linked to the Internet Movie Database for more info. Other, linkless folks are left to rest in peace.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 3

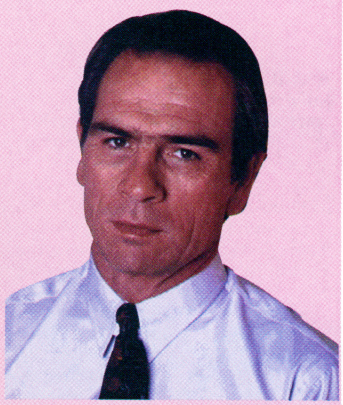
MOBSTERS

THE GODFATHER SCRIPT
www.exit109.com/~jgeoff/godfather/gf1/script.html
NEW More Mafia-mania. Brought to you by J. Geoff "Il Padrino" Malta: a downloadable transcript of the film *as shot and edited*—not merely a copy of the screenplay—including scenes cut but later restored in *The Godfather Epic*. The site boasts a great set of links to Mafia sites, other Coppola- and *Godfather*-related resources, and even the Sicilia Backpackers Hostel, located in Mazara only 60 km from Corleone (and only $7/night!). Who could refuse such a deal?
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

GOODFELLAS MOVIE PAGE
members.aol.com/gfellaswww
NEW Scorsese's sensational cops and Mafia movie meets its match on this Internet site, a loving homage to the film's powerful look, music, and drama. The collection of background material is *serious*: commentaries, articles, background info on cast and crew, trivia (like "Sometimes Henry Hill calls up to the *Howard Stern Show*"), RealAudio clips, a bibliography, and a list of goofs. Lots of hot links, too.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

STARS

THE TOMMY LEE JONES HOMEPAGE
members.aol.com/lukoch2
NEW *Volcano* is only the latest triumph for TLJ, one of the most distinctive and talented of our current crop of character actors. You may remember him from *The Fugitive* and *Under Siege*, among many others. This stylish site includes a list of Tommy Lee's movies appearing on TV this month, newsflashes, a great photo archive, a good bio/filmography, and the fan newsletter *The Jones Gazette*.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4



COLM MEANEY'S VIRTUAL IRISH PUB
members.aol.com/hheyer2003/colm/colm.html
NEW If the only role you associate with actor Colm Meaney is Chief O'Brian on *Deep Space Nine*, this charming site may surprise you. Meaney is actually a highly respected Irish actor, a graduate of Dublin's famed Abbey Theater, with numerous serious character roles to his credit, including stints in *The Dead*, *Under Siege*, and *The Commitments*. Don't forget to bring your darts.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

JOHN TRAVOLTA HOMEPAGE
www.execpc.com/~aemog/travolta.html
Saturday Night Fever grossed $350 million and earned our favorite Scientologist an Oscar nomination. Then came *Grease*, which made $400 million. Some rough sailing followed until *Pulp Fiction* made Travolta hot again. This handsome site documents it all, with a basic bio, an image gallery, TV listings for the month, links to articles and official film promo sites, and fascinating bits of trivia (in *The Devil's Rain*, Travolta melted into slime, screaming "Blasphemer! Blasphemer!").
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

THE UNOFFICIAL JENNY MCCARTHY FAN CLUB
www.jenny-mccarthy.com
NEW Dig into these "unofficial" pictures, sounds, videos, interviews, and articles, all worshipping the ex-Playmate who climbed from MTV's *Singled Out* to her own *Jenny McCarthy Show*. Following her motion picture debut in *Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead*, she's a movie star, too; in fact, Spielberg is rumored to want her in the upcoming *Mask of Zorro*. Also here: several Candie's shoes ads that were too hot for *Vogue* and *Cosmo*.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3



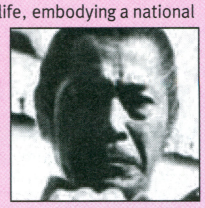
PLANET KILMER
www.milams.com/pkol

NEW Mim Undovitch said "Val is really from the Planet Kilmer, a world of great physical beauty located in the Galaxy of Abstract Ideas." So Val's fans dedicated this Web planet to him, featuring a bunch of enthusiastic e-mail messages from Kilmer aficionados, a fan club mailing list, a chat room, a huge collection of images (called the "Photo Valbum"), and a curious short story titled "The Vampire Kilmer": "The creature smiled. It was Val. They were both sure of it. 'As you see,' he said by way of explanation." Recommended for devoted space travelers only.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

TOSHIRO MIFUNE
www.Sprout.ORG/toshiro

NEW Every culture has its movie icons. For some Americans, it's John Wayne. In Japanese cinema, it's Toshiro Mifune, who stands as the exemplar of a way of life, embodying a national ideal. Check here for a bonanza of details about Mifune's films, including many directed by Akira Kurosawa (like *The Hidden Fortress*, a prime source for *Star Wars*). You'll also find a fine biography and lots of thrilling images.



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

THE OFFICIALLY UNOFFICIAL JULIA ORMOND FAN CLUB
www.escape.ca/~mloewen/julia

NEW Ms. Ormand (who starred in *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, *Sabrina*, and *Legends of the Fall*) is lovely, and—contrary to the all-too-often justified prejudice against beautiful women in movies—she *can* act her way out of a paper bag. But while her screen presence is incandescent, Matt Loewen's fan page is a bit too worshipful. He does include a few anti-Julia articles, but only "as proof that Julia still does not get the respect she deserves." What else are fan pages for, I suppose...

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 2

RECENT RELEASES

HOODLUM
www.hoodlumonline.com

Hoodlum, MGM/UA's action-adventure set in 1930s Harlem stars Lawrence Fishburne and Vanessa Williams. This hot multimedia site is a knockout! Between Bill Duke's Director's Diary and the Shot By Shot backstage journal, you feel like you're on the set. A library of background information and black history links introduce you to Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, lots of real-life gangsters, and the Harlem Renaissance. If every promo site were this good, you'd think you had died and gone to heaven. Or at least to Harlem.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

VOLCANO
www.volcano.com

NEW Flames erupt on screen; Shockwave multimedia gives your system the tremors; powerful studio publicists rattle your determination never to see another disaster movie again. Welcome to the *Volcano* site! Inside you'll find amazing coverage of the worst disaster ever to hit L.A., including The Coast is Toast, a game that dares you to save the City right from your computer desktop. Run for your lives!



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

CRASH
www.alliance.ca/theatre/movies/crash/cr-crash1.html

NEW David (*The Fly*) Cronenberg does not make pleasant, family-entertainment movies. *Crash*, his latest, based on J. G. Ballard's novel, is a dark exploration of eroticism and technology starring James Spader and Holly Hunter. This official site is a killer, with impressive graphics, audio and video downloads, high-res images, and full production credits, plus a fascinating interview with Cronenberg.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

CRASH
www.flf.com/crash

NEW For the *Crash* obsessed, this site is thoroughly and creepily captivating. Film clips flash onscreen unexpectedly as you explore music, art, and related topics. Interviews include a fab session with Cronenberg in which he says: "Bertolucci told me *Crash* is a religious masterpiece. He felt that everyone in the movie is suffering for us, the audience." Hmmm... With links to J. G. Ballard sites, record labels, and other fetish sites.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

WHEN WE WERE KINGS
www.polygram.com/PFE/wwwkings/home-wwwkings.html

NEW It took 23 years for Leon Gast's Academy Award–winning documentary on the Foreman/Ali fight to reach the screen. But when it got there, it landed like a knockout punch! This official Polygram site provides terrific background articles on the film, the fighters, the crew, even the music. No photo gallery per se and no links, but lots of great downloadable JPEG images scattered all around the site.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

CON AIR
www.movies.com/conair

NEW Nicolas Cage, John Cusack, and John Malkovich star in this thriller about a plane loaded with the world's baddest criminals, who are on their way to a new max-security prison when... Wanna guess what happens? The site is set up to give you the feeling that you're boarding the aircraft yourself, and it doles out warnings in funny, quasi-official-sounding language. You learn that on this mission: "You are authorized to 'gag and bag' inmates who scream, spit, or bite." Not fully functional when we visited, but it has the potential to soar to greater heights.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

DISNEY'S HERCULES
www.disney.com/DisneyPictures/Hercules

NEW Aside from Disney graphics and a downloadable trailer, the main attraction here is a shameless advertisement for the national Hercules Mega Mall Tour, a movable theme-park experience with carnival-style activities such as Zeus' Lightning Bolt Toss and the Hercules High Striker game. An animation workshop run by an artist from Walt Disney Features teaches kids how to bring Hercules to life.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

MOVIE VIEWING

REEL STORE
www.reel.com/cgi-bin/reel.exe/XPVQ42TUHU1/storehome.html

NEW Never leave home again. Why? Because we've found easily the best on-line video rental/purchase site ever. A search engine lets you browse by title, actor, or director as well as by using any of a huge number of keywords; and while it didn't find the 1978 thriller *Remember My Name*, it did turn up a rare copy of Richard Lester's obscure movie *The Knack and How to Get It*. Rentals are mailed to you for seven days for no more than $2.80/movie plus shipping.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

GENERAL CINEMA'S NORTHEAST MOVIE WEB
www.gctheatres.com

NEW If you live in Ohio, Massachusetts, New York, Maine, Rhode Island, or Indianapolis, you don't need a newspaper to find out what's playing at the movies. This high-tech, multimedia page provides listings, show times, links to major studios and to the Internet Movie Database, background music, and maps to where the theaters are. Unfortunately, you can't buy tix online, but this site may prove so amusing you'll never make it to the movies at all.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

DRIVE IN THEATER
www.driveintheater.com

NEW Drive-ins aren't just great venues for making out; some people actually go to them to watch the movies! This site celebrates this nearly extinct viewing forum, with pages devoted to the concession stand; the history of outdoor theaters; advertisements from the '50s, '60s, and '70s; and a list of drive-ins organized by state with informative reviews of each one. Just don't forget to remove that speaker before driving away.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 3

RESOURCES

COMING ATTRACTIONS
www.corona.bc.ca/films

NEW Hollywood runs as much on rumors as on lawyers, sex, and money—and this oddball, slightly mysterious site is rumor central. You'll find rumor listings for over 100 film titles, each item organized chronologically and with impeccable source citations. Current listings include the Anthony Waller remake of *An American Werewolf in Paris*, *Battlestar Galactica: The Movie*, *Ender's Game*, and lots on *Starship Troopers* (apparently the film focuses on action rather than Heinlein's plot; someone who read the script says "80% 'Bug Hunt,' 20% book") This site has a new URL, frames and nonframes modes, and remains addictively amusing.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

FILM 100
www.film100.com

How can you *not* respect a site that ranks the 100 most influential people in cinema history—in order of importance? Unlike many online pundits, Silver Planet Studio backs up its opinions with hard facts, too. Most influential person: engineer W. K. Laurie Dickson, who invented motion pictures. Hip, thought-provoking, and fun. Warning: The multiple-window setup is more trouble than it's worth.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

ROUGH CUT
www.roughcut.com

Subtitled "Your Own Private Hollywood," this amazing film zine fills its plate with everything from industry headlines and hot gossip to new video releases, box office grosses, celebrity interviews, a complete listing of film festivals around the world (updated monthly), and a concessions stand that reviews the latest set of Power Rangers. Plus a search engine. With 400+ reviews to scan, you'll need it!



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 5

LEFT-WING FILMS
ccme-mac4.bsd.uchicago.edu/DSADocs/Films.html

Conservatives will be offended, but people interested in the history of liberal/radical ideology in popular culture will be captivated. Sponsored by card-carrying Democratic Socialists of America, LWF offers intelligent film listings (with plot summaries) organized under such categories as environmental and farm struggles, feminism, peace, imperialism and the third world, sexual freedom, history of the left, labor and big business, and race relations.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

WOMEN IN CINEMA: A REFERENCE GUIDE
poe.acc.virginia.edu/~pm9k/libsci/womFilm.html

NEW Surprise! Women aren't just virgins and whores; they're filmmakers and film critics, too. This academic resource includes feminist bibliographies, biographical sources, reviews, filmographies, and a listing of the Top 5 Sources for Women in Cinema. It's a text-only ride, but many of the refs are hot-linked to other sites.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3



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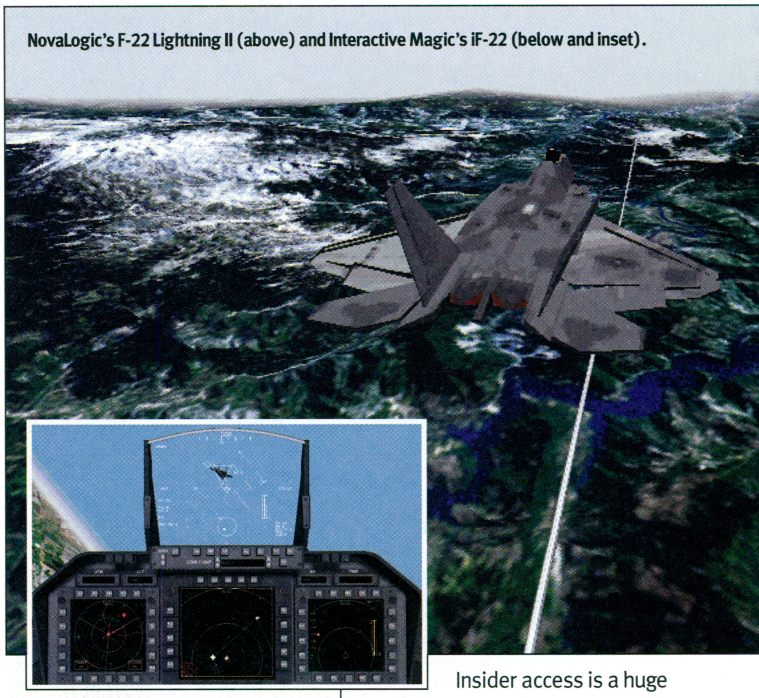
BY ANDREW LEONARD

In-Flight Entertainment

Game makers and the Air Force tango for public favor



NovaLogic's F-22 Lightning II (above) and Interactive Magic's iF-22 (below and inset).



AN OFFICIAL-LOOKING U.S. Air Force sticker, complete with bald eagle, adorns NovaLogic's Web page. A "proud sponsor" of the nonprofit U.S. Air Force Memorial Foundation, the computer game company plans to place the Air Force's 50th anniversary logo on releases of its upcoming jet-fighter simulation, F-22 Raptor.

But it wasn't NovaLogic's idea, says CEO John Garcia. The Pentagon called him. "A week after shipping our F-22 Lightning game, we got a call from a general at the Air Force," Garcia recalls. "He said, 'We've shown this product to fifty generals and the Secretary of the Air Force, and we'd like to get an ongoing relationship with you guys.'"

The phone call was the answer to a sim maker's dreams. A sim—short for *simulation*—duplicates the experience of piloting an actual vehicle or engaging in real combat, often online in multiplayer battles. Industry-wide, annual sim revenues hover at $150 million. Military sims—planes, tanks, submarines, etc.—are especially popular, but a sim *can* involve anything from driving monster trucks to controlling civilizations.

All that money and all those sim categories make for a hotly combative business. NovaLogic, regarded as one of the top sim makers in the business, competes with other game companies (e.g., Interactive Magic and Zombie Interactive) that also sell sims of the M-1 Abrams tank and the F-22 fighter plane.

It's such an attractive commodity, in fact, that the two biggest sim makers, Nova Logic and I-Magic have locked heads over who gets military access and military endorsement. From a legal standpoint, the military cannot co-develop games or cut licensing deals with companies. That's why the "Air Force Memorial Campaign" exists: It's a private organization headed by a retired military man that can do whatever it likes—all while seemingly representing the Air Force.

NovaLogic recently sent I-Magic a cease and desist letter to prevent the latter from shipping its iF-22 game; evidently, both companies had applied for the rights to the name "F-22 Raptor." For its part, I-Magic has taken issue with NovaLogic's "exclusive access" to F-22 information, asserting that the resulting quasi-insider status is illegal and in the long run could ruin competition in the sim market. At press time it appeared that neither company would secure exclusive rights to anything.

WATCH MY BACK, I'LL WATCH YOURS

That's how the game companies look at it. Could the military have a marketing agenda, too? Indeed, when the Pentagon called Garcia, it had more on its mind than just memorials. In the post–Cold War era, obtaining funding for multibillion-dollar extravaganzas ain't as easy as it used to be. Military hardware manufacturers need to make their own products sexy; endorsing a hot tank, helicopter, or jet fighter game is a low-risk strategy to help win the tax-paying public's hearts, minds, and wallets.

"At the Connections '97 Conference at Maxwell Air Force Base in February, the Air Force's agenda on sims was clear," says Jonathan Baron, a flight sim designer for Kesmai Aries, which specializes in creating online, multiplayer games. "Military budgets are being slashed. The Air Force thinks—for legitimate reasons—that money spent on its branch makes the most sense given the world situation today. It views commercial sim makers as one of the Air Force's best PR tools. The more people play modern air combat sims, the more they love the tools of the trade, and the more favorably disposed they are toward aircraft procurement programs."

Evidently, the Air Force paid attention to the positive feedback generated by NovaLogic's copter sim, Comanche. "We've sold more than 1 million units of the Comanche sim." says Garcia. "We've created more awareness of the Comanche than any other source." NovaLogic got a leg up on its competitors by adding real-world combat details. "We've had access to the simulator over at the Sikorsky plant in Connecticut," said Garcia. "Army people have been helpful getting us access to all the nonclassified information. They've given us detailed specifications, all kinds of things. Some of them even come into our offices on their own time, to work on the flight module of the Comanche."

Insider access is a huge advantage for sim makers, which sell authenticity as much as gameplay. Competitive pressures have nudged sim companies closer to defense contractors such as Boeing-Sikorsky and Lockheed-Martin, often hiring ex-military officers, too.

But good publicity isn't the only benefit the military may gain from such close cooperation. "The cost of developing training devices is cut in half if a sim publisher shows up," says Warren Katz, founder of MaK Technologies, which is codeveloping a military simulation game for the U.S. Marines with help from Zombie Interactive. "The cost per hour of training is much less with a PC-based game, because there are already tons of personal computers in the Department of Defense. In addition, these Marines are often cooped up in battleships, and don't have anything to do all day. It's a very worthwhile use of their time."

Despite the clamor for realistic simulations, and the notoriety of the Marines' adoption of Doom,

most people know that real warfare realistically depicted is neither attractive nor fun. Strict fidelity to battlefield realism means having players sit around twiddling their thumbs while they watch a radar screen—not exactly the stuff that makes the top-ten sales lists. As a result, games inevitably sacrifice some of the real-world elements that the military needs most.

Fact is, military equipment manufacturing costs big bucks. "They have only secured funding for 10 out of 400 planes," said I-Magic's Lynn Beamon. "They have to convince the American public that the billions of dollars necessary for this program are needed." Game company reps agree that the invitations they received to events such as the January roll-out of a Comanche prototype and a similar demonstration of the Raptor in April are linked to the funding struggle.

Military equipment manufacturers, however, won't acknowledge any connection. Jack Satterfield, spokesperson for Comanche manufacturer Boeing-Sikorsky, delivered the company line on its demo. "The Comanche is the most sophisticated warcraft in the world, and we are delighted to talk to relevant media about it," he said. "This has no impact on procurement. It just gave us an opportunity to give folks outside the mainstream press a chance to look at an interesting application of advanced computer hardware and software. We told NovaLogic they could come if they didn't turn it into a marketing event. We felt that that would be inappropriate."

Yeah, right.

THE SITES

NOVALOGIC
www.novalogic.com
INTERACTIVE MAGIC
www.imagicgames.com
ZOMBIE
www.zombie.com
KESMAI ARIES
www.kesmai.com

Andrew Leonard *is the author of the forthcoming* Bots: Origin of New Species *(HardWired Press). Address e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*

GAMES Sites | BY CHRIS HUDAK

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: CASINO CENTER

NEW Think there's no such thing as a sure bet? We found it: Billed as the "most comprehensive casino gaming site on the Web," Casino Center is a must-visit for gambling junkies and novices alike. Check out the site's rules and strategy guides, including the ten most frequently asked questions about slot machines, plus tips for playing craps, poker, baccarat, roulette, and blackjack. Visit the online gift shop for your own home gaming accessories, or search the database for casinos that have the largest number of poker games or slot machines. The extensive links will take you to virtually every gambling-related site around. Feelin' lucky yet?

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5



www.casinocenter.com

MULTIPLAYER GAMING

THE HEAT NETWORK
www.heat.net

NEW Sega's much-ballyhooed online gaming network brings some real attitude (however strange) to online gaming. Intending to channel aggressive instincts Netward, the Heat Network features no-cost Internet gaming (it will cost someday) with standing hits like Quake and Red Alert, as well as such SegaSoft newcomers as Scud: The Disposable Assassin, the ultra-gross Flesh Feast on Zombie Island, and the ambitious Ten Six—which purports to be the first million-player online game! All games require Java, Shockwave, and a plug-in called Katalyst, available at Heat.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

STALS.COM—ULTIMATE DUKE NUKEM 3D SITE
www.stals.com/duke3d

NEW "How many more alien races have to get their asses kicked?" One of the funniest, most politically incorrect games for the PC, Duke Nukem 3D has garnered hordes of avid, drooling, chauvinistic followers who are nuts for spreading the Duke message. Here you'll find a staggering quantity of hints, cheats, tips, maps (over 300), downloads, and patches for the 3-D shooter that broke the mold. For both Internet and solo Duking: Hail to the king, baby!

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

GAMEWORLD INTERNET CLUB
www.gameworld.com

NEW Multiplayer gaming sites abound, but few cater to the cross-platform crowd. GIC offers immediate play for PCs, Macs, *and* Unix Web browsers—without requiring users to download or install any special software. The only setback: At press time, it's not up yet. Sign up now and you may still have a chance to be a beta player, meaning you'll receive game credit when Gameworld goes fully commercial. The site also offers a fantasy fiction magazine called Adventure Zine. A ray of hope for true cross-platform gaming, though some clouds must clear first.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

CD-ROM GAMES

CAPCOM
www.capcom.com

NEW Home to the Mega Man game series (including the soon-to-be-released Mega Man 8), Street Fighter, the action/scarefest Resident Evil, the Capcom site sports cheat codes, screen shots, catalogs, video trailers for new and existing games, and a muscular set of links to game developers and reviewers. Keep your eyes peeled for the forthcoming online version of the popular fighter-cum-Tetris game Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

LUCASARTS
www.lucasarts.com

NEW Available in low- and high-bandwidth versions, LucasArts' site provides game previews, factsheets, FAQs, screenshots, an online company store, and demos of some of the hottest titles in the game industry. Current highlights include X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter—a tactical space combat game set in the *Star Wars* universe—and a downloadable version of Outlaws, the best (some might say the only) first-person computer game faithful to the look and feel of Sergio Leone's classic 1960s-era spaghetti westerns (*A Fistful of Dollars, The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, etc.).



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

RUNNING WITH SCISSORS
www.runningwithscissors.com

NEW Good new-fashioned danger: "This site contains content not approved for consumption by children, senators, religious leaders and/or other easily damaged psyches," says the warning. The showcased product: Postal, a flashy, gory psychological action Mac/PC CD-ROM game about a character who goes postal after discovering a twisted plot against humanity. Disturbed readers/gamers will find plenty of game info, images, and behind-the-scenes scoops here. As the site says, "It's always funny until someone gets hurt... and then it's absolutely friggin' hysterical!"

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

RELOADED
www.reloaded.com

NEW "No joke. This stuff is sick and vile." So goes the final warning/come-on offered by this 18-and-over site dedicated to one of the most gratuitously bloody video games (and comics) on the market,



Interplay's Reloaded. Besides the usual game tips, you get an online comic book featuring the game's murderous psychopaths (PC version coming soon!) and the "Dear Butch" advice column. Reloaded has a little sticky red for everybody.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

THE SPACE BAR
www.segasoft.com/space

NEW Designer Ron Cobb (the man behind the creatures in the *Star Wars* cantina scene) and game guru Steve Maretzki (creator of the classic Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy CD-ROM) join forces to bring you SegaSoft's latest, The Space Bar. In this sci-fi game, set in the Thirsty Tentacle bar, you talk to life forms of all kinds, use telepathy/empathy, and solve the 75 puzzles—all to track down a ruthless killer. Come to the Web site to experience the cool QuickTime VR panoramic views of the bar and get a demo version of the game.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

CYBERDREAMS
www.cyberdreams.com

NEW Cyberdreams releases a modest number of games, but the handful it does produce are state of the art: both Darkseed and Darkseed II feature nightmare artist H. R. Giger's biomechanical monstrosities; Wes Craven lent a hand in designing Principles of Fear; and venerable sci-fi author Harlan Ellison wrote scenarios and dialog for the dark and (surprise) controversial I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream. No demos are provided here, just a few screens and descriptions—which makes for an inexplicably content-poor (albeit pretty) brochure site.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

RESOURCES

GAMEPOWER
www.gamepower.com

NEW Hard to imagine any newcomer successfully going up against Gamespot and the big resources sites, but every site has its areas of specialization. Here, the focus is on flashy design and a collection of reviews from many sources. All that in addition to the usual exhaustive set of PC, Mac, Playstation, Saturn, and Nintendo 64 reviews, plus demos, patches, cheats, Easter eggs, a newsletter, a poll ("Sick of first-person shooters yet?"), a chat area, and prizes. Dizzyingly cool.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

GAMEPRO ONLINE
www.gamepro.com

NEW Aimed at a broader (read: "more juvenile") demographic than some of its magazine rivals, GamePro Online provides information on cross-platform interactive entertainment for more than 80,000 registered enthusiasts. You'll find reviews, tips, in-depth strategy guides, contests—just about everything a hardcore player could want before sitting down to 72 straight hours of arduous gaming without a moment's pause for food, sleep, or in-the-flesh human contact. You thought the print version was ugly? Check out the design online!



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

FOR LITERARY TYPES

WORD PLAY
homepage.interaccess.com/~wolinsky/word.htm

Sometimes language itself can be a game. People who love to play with words will enjoy Word Play's links to anagram generators, palindromes, cliché lists, limericks, puns, an online dictionary game, crossword puzzles (and puzzle solvers), a mnemonics page, Hangman pages, The Klingon Language Institute (no kidding), and an incredibly vast collection of sites dedicated to every conceivable way of playing with language.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

COMPUTER GAMES RELATED TO TOLKIEN'S WORKS
www.lysator.liu.se/tolkien-games

NEW Nothing could be geekier than a Web page that combines science fiction/fantasy, computers, and games. And here is the grand prize winner: a site that rounds up every currently available game based on the fictional works of J. R. R. Tolkien (and in particular, his *Lord of the Rings* epic), including links to games organized by game categories, software companies, platforms, and general links, links, links 'til the horse heads come raining down on Minas Tirith. Mostly text, with some screenshots and downloads. "The nerds were small, maybe, but doughty!"

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

WELCOME TO INTERACTIVE FICTION ON THE WEB!
www.truespectra.com/~svanegmo

NEW Designed specifically to mimic the text-only format of pre-Web Net games, this site covers the hows, whys, and whats of interactive fiction. Fans of classic text games like Zork Adventure, and The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy will fondly recall the good old days when these games required mainframes (today they could run on most digital watches). Whether your interest is purely archival or you actually want to dip your toes in the waters of Inform coding (a language used to create interactive fiction games), this is the nuts-and-bolts place to start.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 1 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

MIND GAMES
weber.u.washington.edu/~jlks/mindgame.html

"Think about it for a while, and when your reality begins to shudder at the edges, read the solution." Now that's our kinda games site! The games here reflect the site creator's love of psychology: analytical logic brain-teasers; pattern-recognition killers; and the Math Game, a spooky little lesson about common ways the mind works. You may come away from this site with your brain singing a little—"They're Coming to Take Me Away," maybe.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

THE OFFICIAL SCRABBLE HOMEPAGE
www.scrabble.com

You'd think it's been around as long as hydrogen, but Scrabble is only 60 years old. It's still a best-selling game, though, and there are still times when you just crave it. This official Milton Bradley site covers the history of the game, puts players in touch with opponents, provides access to online sessions and, of course, pushes order-by-Net products such as the Scrabble CD-ROM game.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

MACNAMARA'S BAND INC CROSSWORD PUZZLES
www.macnamarasband.com/janes.html

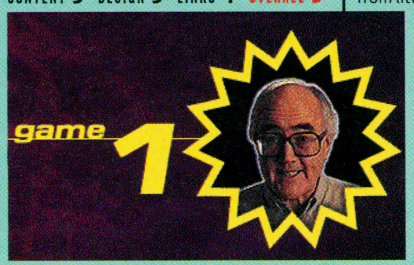
NEW Fred Piscop, a frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, presents his crossword puzzle page for the diehard, pencil-nibbling, newspaper-rustling obsessive maniac in all of us. His puzzles are print-and-solve affairs, with a special Solve and Win challenge that should appeal to the ultra-determined and well-read (though what you stand to win is unclear). If you want a customized puzzle, Fred will engineer a *Times*-quality treat based on the info you provide!

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

JAMES BURKE MYSTERY CONNECTIONS
tlc.discovery.com/area/specials/connections3/connexgame1.html

NEW Smarmy, irritatingly wholesome, and thoroughly intellectual, Mystery Connections is a multiple-choice game based on James Burke's *Connections* series (broadcast on the Learning Channel). What's your Civil War–era hot-ballooning quotient? Think you have a handle on the connection between Voltaire and modern American gymnasts? Want to know what the heck any of this has to do with games? Check this site out, and don't take any of your initial scores too hard: The last person to know all this stuff was Carl Sagan, and look where it got him.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3



BOARD GAMES

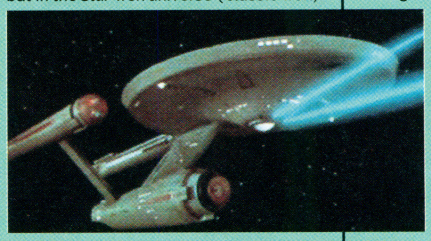
SHOGI
stripe.colorado.edu/~leonarm/japan/shogi

NEW A Japanese board game resembling chess, Shogi utilizes a 9x9 grid (instead of an 8x8 board) with 20 pieces (rather than 16) on a side, plus a few unusual rules: When you capture enemy pieces, for example, you add them to your hand and can reinforce your troops with them later in the game. The familiar rooks, knights, and pawns are here, but so are Silver and Gold pieces. Just wait until Deep Blue learns this one.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

THE UNOFFICIAL STAR FLEET BATTLES HOMEPAGE
www-e815.fnal.gov/~jhkim/fun/sfb.html

NEW Star Fleet Battles—a tactical board game simulating ship-to-ship combat in the *Star Trek* universe (Classic Trek, not this Deep Sleep Nine crap)—is beyond question the most complete, detailed, and daunting starship combat game around. Once you've mastered the 200+ pages of rules covering every tactic, weapon, and ship imaginable, you can play solo or with unlimited other combatants. The USFBH site gives a friendly overview of the game's basics, plus new ship designs and a cargo bay of links to other SFB sites. The Final Frontier awaits your visit.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

ANTI-MONOPOLY: NEXT GENERATION MONOPOLY-TYPE GAME
www.antimonopoly.com

NEW You thought Monopoly, the game, was cutthroat? Check out how the folks who invented the (supposedly) original version feel about the popular Parker Brothers product: "Anti-Monopoly is an upgraded version of the Atlantic City Quaker game named Monopoly, which was plagiarized by a con artist who teamed up with Parker Brothers to market the copied game as MONOPOLY." You'll certainly get a new angle—and possibly the *real* story behind the board game, as well as Anti-Monopoly rules, chance cards, ordering info, and scary political-economic rants.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 2

FAMILY FUN

LIFESAVERS CANDYSTAND
www.candystand.com

Nabisco's Candystand serves up some yummy eye and ear candy in the form of a dozen Shockwave games, several puzzles, contests, and a rack of lifestyles-oriented digizines covering comics, music, teens, and sports. Aimed at visitors of all ages—from little kids to jaded game reviewers—the games alone are worth your time. Check out the LifeSavers Waterpark Pinball (an interactive pinball challenge) and Bet Your LifeSavers TV Trivia (a 1950s-style game show complete with slick emcee). And if you find yourself hankering for some Bubble Yum or a roll of Pep-O-Mint after you log off, so much the better.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

FAMILY GAMES!
www.familygames.com

NEW "Our games are designed for families to play together. We work hard to make them educational but entertaining, non-violent but never dull," boasts the Family Games site. That means demo versions of Pic-Tac-Toe, Jumble, a graphic adventure called Santa's Secret Valley, and a Mad Libs-esque word game called Twisted Tales (in which kids exercise their language and humor skills by making incongruous, anachronistic, or just plain silly textual substitutions in classic fairy tales). Full versions of these games cost around $15 each.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE REALM
www.realmserver.com

The Realm is Sierra On-Line's multiuser domain, ensconced in a typical high-fantasy setting and customizable to a degree not often seen: Mold the physical appearance of your character in detail—lips, eyes, hair color, height, weight, and clothing (or lack thereof: an awful lot of people wander around here in their underwear). Clean, comprehensible, and graphically simple, this family-safe MUD supports endless involvement and addiction, making it an excellent choice for first-time MUD visitors. For Windows PCs only.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

ADULT THEMES

DRINKING GAMES
celebrator.com/rbp/rbp.games.html

NEW Drinking games—an analog form of multiplayer gaming—bring back fond memories of senseless guzzling. Here's your text-based, comprehensive (and potentially life-threatening) guide to just about any kind of drinking-related gaming experience. After offering a serious and "sobering" disclaimer to the effect that alcohol-related car wrecks are very bad things, this site provides links and rules to card games, verbal games, reflex games and the "Endurance/Blotto Games," which are self-explanatory. Frat boys take note.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 1 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

BEER TREK—THE STAR TREK DRINKING GAME
www.spacelab.net/~bongo/beertrek.html

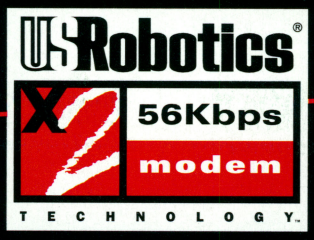
Continually modified by devoted fans with an eye for detail and waaaay too much time on their hands, this may be the most widely played TV-connected drinking game in the world. Players gather 'round when *Star Trek* comes on (special rules take into account which *Star Trek* series is involved) and take a drink—or several—when classic moments occur (e.g., God turns out to be a computer; Kirk violates the Prime Directive; Bones asserts he's a doctor). The loser is the person who wakes up with the biggest hangover.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

EYELUMINATION
www.eyelumination.com

Self-proclaimed "Web site for visual adventures," Eyelumination blurs the line between experimental text adventuring and visual poetry. Case in point: The site's Trevor the Tabloid Paparazzo is a follow-the-branch adventure involving a photographer, a porn actress, and a bunch of bad guys. Imagine a photo-rich comic book with an edge, or a linear but easy-to-navigate Web novella. Foul language runs rampant.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3



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OF INTERNET SERVICE (UP TO $25)

30-DAY
MONEY-BACK
GUARANTEE



* All x2 products are capable of 56 Kbps downloads; however, due to FCC rules which restrict power output of service providers' modems, current download speeds are limited to 53 Kbps. Actual speeds may vary depending on line conditions. Uploads from users to providers travel at speeds up to 28.8 Kbps.
** An x2-capable modem, an x2-compatible analog phone line and an x2-capable service provider are required for these high speed downloads. See www.usr.com/x2 for details.

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x2 Delivers...guaranteed.

x2 Delivers...more than ever

Every day, more and more information is added to the Internet. Whether it's streaming audio or video, larger data files or richer graphics, never before has the need for faster downloads been so great. That's why we created the new x2™ Technology 56K® modem, the fastest ever for regular phone lines.

x2 Delivers...high download speeds now

You don't need to wait to take advantage of this modem's superior download speed. That's because x2 has already received the support of more than 500 Internet service providers (ISPs), from industry giants like America Online, Prodigy and NETCOM to smaller regional providers. In fact, more than 350 of them are live today, with many offering local access. That means you can download at high speeds in all 50 states right now with x2.** It's that simple.

x2 Delivers...free upgrade to standard

You may already know that the international 56K modem standard hasn't yet been defined. That's why we're offering a no-risk guarantee of a free upgrade to make your x2 Technology 56K modem meet the ITU-T standard. And since x2 uses DSP Solutions technology from Texas Instruments, it can easily be upgraded to future performance enhancements as they're developed.

x2 Delivers...guaranteed

To prove just how committed we are to x2, we're introducing "x2 Delivers," a special program that will show you why buying an x2 modem now makes so much sense:

CONNECT NOW
in all 50 states and Canada

*Right now, you can call an ISP and get x2 service, no matter where you live.***

FREE upgrade to ITU-T standard†

After the new 56K ITU-T standard is approved, we'll upgrade your U.S. Robotics x2 Technology 56K modem – absolutely free.

FREE month of service

Now, for a limited time, when you purchase a U.S. Robotics x2 Technology 56K modem, we'll reimburse you for one month of service from any x2-capable Internet service provider – up to $25.

30-day money-back guarantee

We're confident you'll be completely satisfied with your new x2 modem. If not, return it within thirty days of purchase – no questions asked.

See the back cover for complete details of the x2 Delivers program.

x2 Delivers...an easy choice

The ability to connect now in all 50 states and Canada. A free month of service. A free upgrade to the ITU-T standard. A 30-day money-back guarantee. It couldn't be any easier. For more information, visit **http://x2.usr.com/connectnow**, or call **1-800-525-USR1** to find a provider near you with live x2 service.

Now get high speed downloads with modems from the company that connects more people to the Internet than any other. If extra speed is what you're looking for, remember one thing: x2 delivers.

U.S.Robotics®

U.S.Robotics x2 TECHNOLOGY

x2 Delivers GUARANTEED

CONNECT NOW WITH MORE THAN 350 ISPs NATIONWIDE
FREE UPGRADE TO 56K ITU-T STANDARD
FREE MONTH OF INTERNET SERVICE (UP TO $25)
30-DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

Buy any Sportster,® Courier™ or Megahertz® 56K modem with x2™ Technology between June 1 and September 15, 1997 and get one month of Internet service plus upgrade to 56K ITU-T standard,[1] FREE. And if you're not satisfied after 30 days you can return the modem for a full refund.

To get your free month of Internet service with an x2-capable Internet service provider, just complete and return the form below.

Then, you'll also be registered for the free upgrade. After the ITU-T standard for 56K modems is approved, we'll upgrade your U.S. Robotics x2 Technology 56K modem, free of charge. Since every x2 modem is equipped with Flash ROM, we expect the upgrade to be as simple as a software download from the Internet. If it's not, we'll replace your modem with one that does meet the new standard – free of charge. Register your modem, and after the 56K standard is approved by the ITU-T, we will notify you how and when to get your free upgrade. Approval is expected some time in early 1998.

And again, if you're not satisfied with your U.S. Robotics x2 Technology 56K modem, simply return it within 30 days of purchase, along with dated receipt, to the store or mail order reseller where you bought it for a full refund.

1 Guaranteed upgrade valid for all currently available Sportster 56K Faxmodems (Models 1783, 1784, 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1789), Courier 56K Faxmodems (Models 1867, 1868 and 1869) and Megahertz 56K PC Card Faxmodems (Models XJ1560, CC1560, XJ5560, CC5560). This offer valid in the U.S. and Canada only.

U.S.Robotics x2 TECHNOLOGY

FREE MONTH OF INTERNET SERVICE

Get 1 month of Internet service from any ISP live now with x2 Technology (up to $25).

To get your free month of Internet service:

1. Buy any Sportster, Courier or Megahertz modem listed below between June 1 and September 15, 1997.
2. Call 1-800-525-USR1 or visit http://x2.usr.com/connectnow to find out if your current ISP has live x2 service now. If not, choose one of the x2-capable ISPs listed there.
3. Fill in all requested information on this form.
4. Enclose this completed form with a copy of your dated modem receipt, original UPC bar code symbol and serial number from the modem package (see samples below) and proof of your x2 ISP monthly fee (credit card bill or monthly statement) and mail to:
   U.S. Robotics, x2 Delivers, PO Box 8061, Young America, MN 55551-8061
   (Any questions regarding this program, please call 1-800-727-2107.)

(Please print all information clearly.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

Phone _____ **E-mail Address** _____

Retailer / Mail Order where modem purchased _____

ISP Name _____ **Monthly fee** _____

Internet service offer valid with purchase of Sportster 56K Faxmodems models 1783, 1784, 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1789; Courier 56K Faxmodems models 1867, 1868 and 1869 and Megahertz 56K PC Card Faxmodems models XJ1560, CC1560, XJ5560, CC5560 only; purchased between June 1, 1997 and September 15, 1997. Request must include copy of dated modem sales receipt, actual UPC bar code and serial number from the modem package, and proof of x2 ISP monthly fee. One Internet service refund per address. Not responsible for lost, late or misdirected mail. Request must be postmarked by November 15, 1997. Valid in U.S. and Canada only. Not valid with any other offer. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for receipt of check. Consumer is responsible for payment of monthly fee to service provider.

UPC SAMPLE

x XXXXX XXXXX x

SERIAL NUMBER SAMPLE

21NG23xxxxxx

The following UPC codes are the only acceptable codes for this offer. No other UPC codes are valid. Tape UPC bar code over this box.

7-38168-00611-3	7-38168-00612-0	7-38168-00613-7	7-38168-00614-4
7-38168-00615-1	7-38168-00616-8	7-38168-00630-4	7-38168-00629-8
7-38168-00682-3	6-62662-52776-1	6-62662-52939-0	6-62662-52778-5
6-62662-52823-2	6-62662-52825-6	7-36168-00686-1	7-36168-00669-4
7-36168-00670-0	7-36168-00687-8		

Tape serial number & bar code over this box.

BY DOUG FINE

No More № 2 pencils

GREs, SATs, and URLs: Standardized tests and prep courses get wired

ASPIRING BUSINESS STUDENTS who take the standardized Graduate Management Admission Test (GMATs for short) this fall won't be working with number 2 pencils. They'll use computer keyboards instead.

That's because, starting this fall, the GMATs will be given exclusively on computer. And it's not the only standardized test to get wired: The GRE graduate entrance exam, the NCARBs for architects, and other standardized tests are already offered in both on- and offline formats; roughly 100,000 students are expected to take the GREs via computer this year. A computerized version of the SATs—the college admissions exam taken by some 2.5 million high schoolers annually—is only a gleam in test designers' eyes. But it's coming.



THEA SCHRACK

Test organizers at the College Board, which administers most standardized tests in the U.S., and the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which writes them, say computerized tests have two key advantages.

First, computerized testing allows faster grading turnaround, so tests can be offered more frequently. The qualification exam that 250,000 potential nurses take every year, is now available three days a week—up from twice a year—on terminals at approved sites. And grading is almost immediate: Colleges can be notified of scores within a week. The second advantage is that the computerized format allows test givers to probe their specimens more deeply.

"Let's say a student gets an answer correct in a particular math area in today's paper version of the SAT," says Jeffrey Penn, spokesman with the College Board in New York. "That's the end of it. On a computerized test, a correct answer could trigger more questions on that topic to see how deep the knowledge goes, which makes for a more comprehensive test. It's not just the old test on a computer."

The architecture tests already include drawing and layout questions, thanks to the flexibility of the computer-based tests. Test takers actually use computer assisted design to plan out the landscaping for a house.

Not surprisingly, the new testing system still has a few bugs. Chief among them: Computerized tests could be unfair if they measured computer literacy as well as scholastic aptitude. This isn't a problem at the graduate level, where candidates tend to be computer literate. But it could seriously skew results among high schoolers taking the SATs. Already, the College Board faces complaints about cultural bias in the tests. Now students in poorer school districts, which can't afford computer training, could be at a further disadvantage when the SATs ditch the pencils. "We're putting a lot of research into this right now," says the College Board's Penn. "We don't want two classes of test taker."

Another potential pitfall is security. How can the testers confirm the identity of a test taker on a machine? The TOEFL exam, which tests English as a second language, will soon be fully computerized, but not before the College Board and test center contractors implement a sophisticated photo ID process.

Executives at the Princeton Review, one of several test-prep services that profit from the imperfections of standardized exams, say they aren't worried about the move toward computerization. "This process will just reward a new class of good test taker," says Paul Cohen, Public Relations Manager at the Princeton Review. "The ETS won't reveal their methodology, so it's just a question of figuring out the test." Which is what millions of test takers pay Princeton and other test-preparation services to do.

PREPARING FOR THE INEVITABLE

The tests themselves are only slowly making their way onto the computer, but the test-prep services are already there. The Princeton Review and its chief competitor, Stanley Kaplan, have offered software versions of their course materials for years. Both now have major Web presences, too. Students can sign up for courses, find test dates, and order products. At the College Board site, students can also register for tests.

But neither company offers full courses online—yet. After testing the idea, Kaplan concluded that students and teachers couldn't interact enough. "We feel right now that attended classes are the best option," says Hodas. "What we'll probably see in the near future is a hybrid of classes, online preparation, and CD-ROMs."

Some smaller test-prep operations have moved online more aggressively. Test-prep guru Henry Davis offers a full regimen of his secrets on his Web site, The Study Hall. Students can find complete past tests, vocabulary-laden novellas, and mnemonic tips. When asked how he hopes to make money by giving it all away, Davis says, "We advertise some of our videos and test materials on the site. But the real point is, I'm no fan of the test itself. If we help some kid in Maui do a few

hundred points better on the SATs, so much the better."

Test takers can also use the Net to devise their own programs of test preparation. Test-related materials from exam software to PSAT flash-cards can be found online, and Davis sees a definite advantage in students' adopting a self-directed approach: "First of all, they work at their own pace, without any deadline or peer pressure. They don't have to be embarrassed if they don't understand a certain type of problem. Second, they can continue working on an unlimited number of questions in that problem area, all on their own time."

What's next for standardized tests, after online preparation and administration? One possibility: using the Net as a research tool during tests. Just as working with calculators—considered cheating ten years ago—is now standard practice, SAT students may one day be asked to surf the Web to find the capital of Albania or the antonym of *requite*.

According to Mike Shaffer, executive director of the Transition 2000 project at the College Board, the SAT of 2007 will look "very different" from the test students see today. Given the skills needed to excel in society, future SATs could well cover computer and Net skills in addition to verbal and math aptitude. But Shaffer says students needn't worry about that yet: "For now, the only place computer proficiency will be required is the AP Computer test." ■

THE SITES

COLLEGE BOARD
www.collegeboard.org
ETS
www.ets.org
STANLEY KAPLAN
www.kaplan.com
THE PRINCETON REVIEW
www.review.com
THE STUDY HALL
rampages.onramp.net/~studyhal

Doug Fine writes about everything from high-tech hackers to adventure investigations in the Burmese jungle. Send e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.

HOME/EDUCATION Sites | BY MARK ATHITAKIS

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: THE HOT AND SPICY COOKING PAGE

NEW A recipe collection with an emphasis on food that hurts. Get yer marinades, barbecue sauces, dry rubs, gravies—most of the recipes requiring some quantity of red pepper flakes, jalapeños, or Tabasco. Just reading the list of ingredients for "Super Burgers" is enough to raise your cholesterol level—we're talking greasy food heaven. Be sure to check out the links to other pages devoted to burning your taste buds. Lite on graphics, heavy on the stomach.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5



www.teleport.com/~cstarz

HOME SECURITY

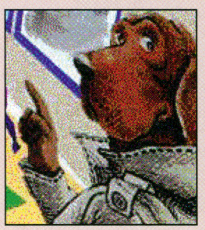
HOME SECURITY FACTS
www.getsafe.com

NEW Protecting your home against theft, intruders, and fire doesn't have to mean spending an arm and a leg—or replicating the architectural charm of Sing-Sing. GetSafe has plenty of common-sense security ideas (don't leave your keys under the welcome mat, duh) that won't cost you a dime. If you're looking to invest some dough, check the listing of nationwide security professionals. The site's newsletter is a must-read, delving into such varied topics as combating computer viruses and lending money to relatives. (Advice on the latter: Don't!)

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL ON-LINE RESOURCE CENTER
www.ncpc.org

NEW The folks who brought you McGruff the Crime Dog have put together an impressively deep site dedicated to keeping your home and neighborhood safe. The sobering crime statistics are balanced by dozens of articles on everything from teaching kids street smarts to organizing a Community Watch in your town. Some of the suggestions are a tad soft ("Settle arguments with words, not fists or weapons"), and they might have provided a few useful offsite links, but otherwise a valuable and wide-reaching resource.



CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

RON'S SAFETY AND SECURITY HOME PAGE
ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ren_productions

NEW The jus'-folks design doesn't inspire immediate confidence, nor does the not-particularly-skeptical article on the Roswell incident. But Ron Nelson—a 25-year veteran of the security business—knows stuff, and he's packed a mountain of know-how into an intelligent, informative, and thorough (if homely) site. Most of the content comes from current and back issues of Nelson's opinionated *Safety & Security Magazine*, but you'll also find plenty of other articles on handling the hazards of fires, hurricanes, and even the Thanksgiving turkey.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

SECURITY RESOURCE CENTER
www.securityresource.com

NEW If investing in a home security system sounds like a daunting—even paranoid—process, this site will ease your mind. The "10 Tips for Selecting an Alarm Company" are just that. You also get a handy list of questions to ask security device vendors, many of which you'd never think of asking yourself. Separate sections cover business security and lists of professional dealers, plus a smattering of home security links.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

HOME BUILDING

HOUSENET
www.housenet.com

NEW Can't decide whether to hire a contractor or to build it yourself? Then check out HouseNet's "Do It Yourself or Not?" For 26 home improvement projects, it compares the time and costs of hiring a contractor versus tackling it yourself. Surprise, surprise: The latter almost always makes more sense. Which may be why your hosts offer how-to tips on almost every conceivable remodeling and building job.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL
www.habitatlb.org

NEW If you're looking to brush up on your carpentry skills, or if you just want to do the right thing, Habitat for Humanity—famed for building high-quality low-income housing worldwide—is a good place to start. The "true stories" section (tales of community labor from people with all ranges of skills) should provide some inspiration. Should you get motivated to volunteer, a search engine will point you toward your closest affiliate.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

THE HOME OWNER/BUILDER SITE
www.cris.com/~scottaw/ownbuild/ownbuild.shtml

NEW When we visited, the site was being remodeled—seriously. But under the dust and rubble, you can discern the outlines of a worthwhile site. It's primarily a Yahoo-esque collection of links to online hardware stores, developers, and other helpful sites for builders. An ongoing diary of the author's building project, detailing the benefits and pitfalls of the undertaking, is worth a look. A link to Amazon.com is supplied for book-buying builders.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

HOMEARTS SEARCH CENTER
www.homearts.com/waisform/homeplan.htm

NEW Another ingenious idea from the HomeArts people: Specify your criteria—square footage; number of baths, bedrooms, and stories; style; garage; patio; and so on—and Home Finder will show you floor plans (all designed by licensed architects or building designers and complying with nationally recognized building codes) that meet your needs. If you like what you see, you can order the plans online. Too bad the presentation is so glitchy. What, I can't get a two-bedroom traditional with a deck?

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

RESTORE AMERICA
www.restoreamerica.com

NEW If you need to hire extra help for a remodeling project, Restore America will walk you through the dos and don'ts of dealing with contractors. The advice is basic but helpful. And if it's not enough, follow the links to state licensing boards. The Questions and Answers area promises that a building professional will respond to your query at no additional charge.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

PETS

BREED FAQ HOMEPAGE
www.zmall.com:80/pet_talk/dog-faqs/breeds

NEW Trying to decide between a Samoyed and a Saluki? Need to know how often to walk your Whippet? Want to find out if it's safe to leave Uncle Harry's Dachshund alone with the kids? Check this comprehensive database of FAQs for 87 breeds—from Affenpinschers to Yorkies—covering breed characteristics, temperament, care and training, special medical problems, and more. A rare doggy site that doesn't just roll over and play dead.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

ACME PET
www.acmepet.com

NEW From parakeets to ponies, from goldfish to golden retrievers, Acme Pet has a wealth of information on almost any type of pet imaginable. Organized by animal, each section has pointers to products and services, extensive and well-annotated offsite links, online articles, lists of local animal advocates, glossaries, even a lost and found. If you can't find what you need, use the search function to scan the entire site. One strange thing: Acme uses the site to advertise its Web design services, but visually AP's a bit of a bowser. Otherwise, good boy!

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4



GETTING A PET
www.tezcat.com/~ermiller/getapet.html

NEW Before you rashly cave in to Junior's incessant whining for that cute little Rottweiler puppy, read this page. Whether you're looking for a dog or cat, you'll find plenty of good advice here (and at the business end of the site's plentiful links) on finding a pet, avoiding "puppy mills," and making sure you know which pet is right for your needs. After all, as the site reminds us, "a pet is for life, not just for Christmas."

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

PET LINKS
www.petlinks.com

Get the FAQs—and much more—on cats, dogs, birds, fish, rodents, reptiles, and all the other animals you might keep in your house. Sites at this links collection are rated on a scale of one to four "treats" and are grouped by quality (groups in the dog section range from Top Dogs down to In the Dog House). You also get a Pet Site of the Week, a list of videos you can order, and lots of gratuitous cuteness.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

ASPCA
www.aspca.org

NEW The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) isn't just interested in finding homes for animals; it also wants well-trained potential owners. Hence the ASPCA's online primers on caring for dogs, cats, rabbits, and more. But wait, there's more: You'll also find guides to adopting a pet, a short list of books for kids who own pets, and updates on current legislation that may impact pets and their humans.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

PET STATION
www.petstation.com

NEW A little thesaurus can be a dangerous thing: The Pet Station gets this month's Cuuute Award for its Petstation Realms—pet-specific sections with darling names like "Bird Barn," "Cat Cabana," "Dog Domain," and (our favorite) "Herp Hacienda." (No "Vermin Verandah," however.) The Pet Station doesn't post all the details on Fluffy and Fido you can locate elsewhere, but it does let you submit your pet questions to the in-house vets. And to its credit, the listing of pet organizations is mind-bogglingly comprehensive (there's an International Manx Society?). The photo galleries and user-submitted stories are predictably, um, cute.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

HOW TO TOILET TRAIN YOUR CAT
www.rainfrog.com/mishacat/toilet.shtml

NEW If you're tired of scooping cat turds, train your cat to use the john. This award-winning site gives exhaustive instructions, though you might not have the requisite couple of months to devote to the process. (The author's cat Misha picked it up quickly, but it turns out that Misha also speaks seven languages and is a master chef). Some cats can even be trained to



flush, but don't even think about getting them started with toilet paper.

CONTENTS 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

CHILDCARE

CAREGUIDE
www.careguide.net

The doodle designs that pepper the site may seem whimsical, but CareGuide takes its mission—providing information on childcare and elderly care—seriously. A search engine, organized by U.S. state and Canadian province, helps you find childcare centers, preschools, and family care providers for the kids. Alternatively, you can search for nursing homes, assisted-living residences, and retirement communities for the folks. The Parents Speak Out! bulletin board lets 'rents share experiences on every imaginable topic related to childcare, from picking the right care alternative to promoting pet safety.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN
www.america-tomorrow.com/naeyc

If it involves childcare, the folks who run this site have probably been there, done that, added up the numbers, and decided to devote an entire separate page to it. Much of the material available here—accreditation standards, educational books, and videos related to the trade—is geared toward providers, not parents. Nonetheless, moms and dads should take a peek at the comprehensive fact sheets on some of daycare's more complex topics, including teaching children about prejudice and choosing the right learning program. Registrants can participate in a discussion forum.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

AMERICAN CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS
www.parentsplace.com/readroom/ACS

NEW Deciding where to park Junior for the day boils down to choosing between two basic options: in-home or not. If you are considering both possibilities, check here for concise backgrounders ("What's the Difference Between a Nanny and an Au Pair?") and extensive links to offsite resources. The design is graphics-lite and clean, but not exactly fetching. There are even links to sites for kids, many of which seem to be defunct. (What? Beverly's Craft Page has shut down because Beverly got a promotion? Waaah!)

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

CHILD CARE AND NUTRITION INC.
www.siteit.com/ccni

NEW If we see one more childcare site decorated with that cutesy faux hand-scrawled lettering, we're gonna scream. In this case, the backward N stands for nutrition. The site caters to childcare pros who have to feed herds of the little darlings. But parents faced with feeding one or two will find some worthwhile information here, too: You'll get info on Recommended Daily Allowances, recipes, even cute holiday activity ideas. Don't miss the ranking of 250 breakfast cereals by sugar content.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

WEE-PAK
www.datasys.net/edpak/weehome.html

Lots to see here. Unfortunately, you'll have to swim through a sea of clutter to get to it. Most of the site is devoted to daycare products—tools, games, fundraising aids—but the collection of informative fact sheets and checklists for parents is comprehensive. Skip the Kids Only area, though, where the cupboard is bare except for a few reference links and story submissions.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

BARBECUE/GRILLING

BARBECUE'N ON THE INTERNET
www.barbecuen.com

The first taste test we consider in gauging the quality of a barbecue site: Does it distinguish between "grilling" (direct-flame cooking in the open air) and "barbecuing" (a.k.a. "smoking")? This one does—and it covers both—which puts it head and (pork) shoulders above many other 'cue sites. The Webmasters at Barbecue'n serve up detailed information on everything from types of grills to smoking techniques; we particularly liked the recipes for dry rubs and marinades. Now you have no excuse for burning the weenies at your next family get-together.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

THE BARBECUE SOURCE
www.bbqsource.com

Mass-market, store-bought barbecue sauce too watery and mild for your taste? Barbecue Source sells a wide array of sauces from small independent companies, as well as spices, equipment, and other accessories. You'll also find sizable collections of tips and links (though the set of recipes is pretty lean). And if you think you've got the stuff to compete in cookoffs and contests, check here for pointers on them. Online ordering is available.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

BACKYARD BARBECUE BUFF
edge.net/~markh

NEW The cute-but-crude opening image of Pancetta the Pig should tell you that this guy is no Web pro. He is, however, passionate about pork and any other meat you can barbecue. And we're talking the real deal: The author assembled his own smoker ("The Blue One") out of garage junk, and advises you to cook your pork shoulder "16–20 hours at a constant temperature of 225 degrees." Like many 'cue-heads on the Web, the BBB man is eager to share his smokin' know-how, as well as a personal bio and some good offsite links.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

REDESIGNED FOR YOUR BROWSING PLEASURE!

What's New and What's Live on the Web?
We bring you the best of each, every day,
at THE WEB Magazine Online.

www.webmagazine.com

BY MARJORIE INGALL

Logging In, Coming Out

Supportive and safe gay sites lead the way out of the closet

EVERYONE FEELS ISOLATED and misunderstood occasionally. But nothing matches the aloneness of a gay teenager who feels he or she can't come out to anyone. For closeted gays and lesbians, the Web can be a lifesaver.



FEEL SO ALONE

"I live in a loggers' town that's very unforgiving, full of narrow-minded individuals," says 17-year-old Anthony. "As far as I can see I'm the only homosexual in this whole town. Last Halloween, a couple of kids called me out of class. One of them held a 2-foot pipe and the other was standing close and said, 'I feel like some gay-bashing, Anthony; how about it?' Then the bell rang, and the two laughed and ran off."

When it came to support and understanding, Anthony had distressingly few options to choose from. He looked for advice and help in his community, but the nearest support group was in a college town a couple of hours away. It might as well have been in Timbuktu. As another gay teenager put it, "No way!! You live at home. You have to explain where you're going and what you'll be doing there and why. If I went to a group, I'd be scared that I'd see someone I knew—which is kind of stupid actually because, duh, they'd be there, too!"

Then Anthony got a computer and everything changed. Soon he was clicking his way through a world of resources for gay youth, from online magazines like Oasis and Elight to newsgroups such as soc.support.youth.gay-lesbian-bi to nonprofits like PFlag-Talk (the home of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays' mailing lists) and the GLBT Youth Resource Directory (for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and questioning youth). In cyberspace, Anthony tapped into a whole new community of nonjudgmental peers—a "safe zone" that offered advice, information, and emotional support. Eventually, he even found a boyfriend online. ("It's like Romeo and Romeo!" he says.) Now he's planning a post-graduation move to Vancouver, Washington, a larger, more tolerant city.

YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE

Scott Bidstrup, 48, understands what Anthony went through. "I grew up a Mormon in southern Idaho. My father said that being gay was the only thing he'd disown me for. I vowed that if I could ever help other kids, I would. And so I have." The result: a comprehensive site called The Cool Page for Queer Teens! (His exclamation point! Dorky! But cute!)

The Cool Page site is filled with essays and links—helpful to closeted folk of all ages—that address what it means to be gay, how to come out, what to do if you're "outed" before you're ready, and how to find local resources. Bidstrup's site also offers a section for parents of gays and lesbians.

"The Web offers people the ability to find information about who they are without their having to risk being seen in a library or bookstore, or at a magazine stand," Bidstrup says. "Often, it's the only source of information someone has—and it can be very, very comforting to know that you aren't alone. Many teens are deeply closeted, not just to their friends and family, but to themselves as well."

A younger contingent is also involved in spreading support for gays in cyberspace. Last year, Jason Hungerford, 20, started two youth-only mailing lists, one for 13- to 17-year-olds and one for 17- to 21-year-olds. Around 500 kids subscribe, asking questions, offering advice, and just socializing. (Hungerford himself gets about 200 e-mails a day.)

"My list is not a dating service," Hungerford points out. "File attachments aren't allowed, so it's not like we're trading pictures. And if anyone says 'Is there anyone out there who wants to chat on the phone?' they're off the list. Public trawling is so tacky."

CYBER SMARTS

Hungerford's advice for young gays and lesbians exploring the Net is practical for everyone: Use common sense, and don't give out your address or phone number. (Watching Out for Yourself in Online Relationships—a page from !Out-Proud!, the National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Youth—offers more tips on the subject.)

Not surprisingly, Hungerford has received some flak from people who are offended by the kind of information he's making accessible to kids. But the opposition certainly isn't stopping him. "By depriving kids of information, all parents are doing is depriving their kids of a chance to make educated decisions," he says, "whether those decisions happen to be about safer sex or about

KEVIN BAPP

drugs or about sexual orientation."

Of course, the Web is a microcosm of the world, and for every upbeat, educational, tolerant, and gay-positive site, there's one like godhatesfags.com, brought to you by the compassionate folks at Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas. (Interestingly, Network Solutions, the company that registers domain names, issued this one in spite of having a standing policy of turning down "hateful" names.)

"Wake up and smell the brimstone from the fire that is lapping at your feet!" the Westboro site exhorts. Among the tactics it advocates is uninvited preaching at funerals of people who died of AIDS-related illnesses.

Given such divergent and passionately held points of view, it's not surprising that the Web has spawned so much activity on the subject of coming out. And no site is more passionate and heartfelt than Gabi Clayton's homepage, a moving tribute to her 17-year-old son Bill, a bisexual who committed suicide. It's a chilling reminder that support and compassion can be hard to find. Perhaps the Net can help to change that. ■

THE SITES

PFLAG-TALK AND TGS-PFLAG HOME PAGE
www.critpath.org/pflag-talk
SOC.SUPPORT.YOUTH.GAY-LESBIAN-BI
www.youth.org/ssyglb
OASIS
www.oasismag.com
ELIGHT! A GAY YOUTH EZINE
www.youth.org/elight
THE GLBT YOUTH RESOURCE DIRECTORY
members.aol.com/OurYouth
THE COOL PAGE FOR QUEER TEENS!
www.pe.net/~bidstrup/cool.htm
YOUTH! ELECTRONIC MAIL LISTS
www.critpath.org/youth
WATCHING OUT FOR YOURSELF IN ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS
www.cyberspaces.com/outproud/html/brochure_watching_out.html
WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH
godhatesfags.com
GABI CLAYTON
members.tripod.com/~claytoly

***Marjorie Ingall** is the author of* The Field Guide to North American Men *(Henry Holt). Send e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*

LIVING/HEALTH Sites | BY SALLY JACOB

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: gURL

NEW This smart teen zine (packed with fun and flashy graphics) fills the void left by the demise of *Sassy*, with the added spark of true interactivity. Readers are encouraged to contribute to the Exhibitionist section, post their own Web site reviews, and submit their mug shots for virtual makeovers. The Paper Doll Psychology game, which lets you mix and match clothes and then psychoanalyzes your ensemble, is irresistible—even if you're not a 15-year-old female. Articles strike the right balance between silly and serious, frankly addressing real-life gURL issues like parental divorce, stuffed-animal therapy, and "The Mystery in Your Panties."



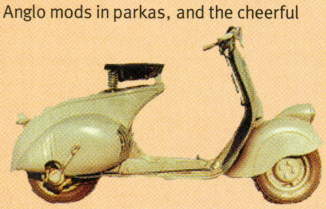
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

www.gURL.com

HOBBIES

BIRDING ON THE WEB
www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/birding.html
A bit light on graphics, though the Exhibits section does include some very nice sample color plates (South American antbirds, African bustards, Mexican thrushes, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue-footed Booby, etc.). But Birding on the Web excels if you require digests and archives of e-mail lists pertaining to birds, or if you need to know the Latin species name for the Magpie Goose. Gaggles of links are sure to keep birdwatchers away from the backyard feeder for a while.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

VESPA OBSESSION
www.vespa.org
NEW The Vespa scooter: conveyance of choice for Italian actresses in heels, Anglo mods in parkas, and the cheerful



nut who runs this site. Most scooter sites out there are missing as many parts as the vintage vehicles they honor, but Vespa Obsession sports a souped-up FAQ and super links. The latter include such peppy possibilities as "Vespa del Psychedelico!" and "I Am Vespa Boy!" (both of which, alas, are currently MIA).
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

THE INFORMATION SUPER DANCE FLOOR
www.apci.net/~drdeyne
NEW Time was, a feller who knew the Texas Two-step and the Cotton-eyed Joe could "kick it on off" all night long; but line dancin' done changed ever'thang. The ISDF, straight outta southwest Illinois, bulges with dance steps like an ol' boy's belly after 20 years on a yella beer diet. It'll learn you how to do the Whiskey Wiggle, the Redneck Romp, the Metamorphosize, the Big Hair, and a whole slew of others. Yessirree Bob, it's even got a glossary and a page of etiquette tips so y'all won't brawl in the hall.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

PENTHUSIASM
penthusiasm.pencentral.com
NEW Just got your first Waterman and wondering whether to get into collecting? If this site is any indication, being a Penthusiast means indulging a penchant for bad puns ("I ink, therefore I am"), and traveling to far-flung Pen Shows to experience such thrilling events as "While You Watch" fountain pen repairs! If your heart is fluttering madly, then by all means go ahead—shell out $1,500 for that Montblanc Agatha Christie.
CONTENTS 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 3

COMMUNITIES

TRIPOD
www.tripod.com
One of the Web's virtual communities, Tripod offers free homepages to members and aims to attract the 18-to-35 crowd. Tripod's own homepage narrowcasts news, games, and surveys relevant to Gen-Xers. Sample topics include jobs, recreational drugs, cheap and chic home furnishings, and leisure time (or lack thereof). The content's above average: You may encounter the Schlitz Fan Club Update Page; but you're equally likely to stumble across articles on the legal status of abortion, or the pros and cons of life insurance coverage.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

NETNOIR
www.netnoir.com
NEW One of the largest sites devoted to the African-American experience, NetNoir is divided into sections on Lifestyle (including music, sports, and the SoulSpa, a virtual "health & fitness resort"), Community (including personals, chat rooms, and interview archives), and Empowerment (including business and education). Links include site reviews, which employ a "5-Globe" rating system. NetNoir would really be da bomb if its content were updated more frequently.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

THE WITCHES' WEB
www.witchesweb.com
Never mind Halloween. Every day's a holiday when you're a witch. Check the Virtues calendars posted here to identify and observe Movable Feasts, Goddess Days of the Moon, and seasonal festivals and pagan ritual traditions from around the world—all laid out on impeccably designed pages. (Perhaps the witches skipped writing code and just twitched their noses!) The new Links section aims to promote unity in the Witch/Pagan community. A



few deserving sites receive the special "Witches' Web Award for Excellence."
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 3 OVERALL 5

ALL RAW TIMES HOMEPAGE
www.rawtimes.com
Anti-mucus crusaders, wheatgrass enema fanatics, and radical fruitarians converge at this site where the oven and the range-top are demonized as destroyers of life-sustaining nutrients. Learn how to make sauerkraut with a bucket and a baseball bat, or yummy pizza in only 40 hours using a dehydrator. Discover the Essene Gospel, in which Jesus and John detox "a band of diseased seekers." Even if you're not a live food freak, you've gotta admire those who like it raw.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

RELATIONSHIPS

DIVORCEINFO
www.divorceinfo.com
NEW For every thousand Web sites that focus on weddings, you'll find maybe one devoted to divorce. DivorceInfo is a good'un. Begin at the Divorce Sucks page and forge on from there. You'll get clear, candid information on taxes, property, child custody, dealing with depression, even special resources for Jews, Catholics, and Muslims. A handy search engine does wonders at, in the words of the author (a lawyer from Alabama), "cutting through the crud." Bonus: an adorable picture of the host's "worthless Yellow Lab."
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

HEARTLESS BITCHES INTERNATIONAL
www.heartless-bitches.com
NEW From the name of their club to the ax-through-the-heart logo gracing the homepage, the Heartless Bitches aren't into subtlety. Their position on relationships is "B good or B gone"; and the testimonials, manifestos, surveys, and satires that disseminate this philosophy are often both empowering and entertaining—even hilarious. Unfortunately, an excess of me-first-ism translates into too heavy an overlay of post-Oprah pop feminism. But varying the voice just a touch would make HBI a top-dog site.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

RELATIONSHIP LLCS
www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/3549

NEW The love of your life takes you to a candlelit restaurant, leans over, takes your hand, looks deep into your eyes, and forms the words: "Would you... incorporate with me?" Not very romantic, but creating a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) is one way a same-gender couple, group of friends, or other unconventional family unit can obtain legal recognition. An LLC can act as one entity to buy a house, provide health insurance to its members, and obtain credit cards. Get the facts at this site.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

FLIRTING HOME PAGE
www.flirts.com

NEW All you Lotharios out there had better swing on over to our Sexuality section; this page is pretty tame. As you might suspect, it hints at gratification but ends up delivering "Good Clean Fun"—with the emphasis on *Clean*. The main attraction here is the Dear Abby–style advice to a succession of more or less clueless correspondents. Easiest to enjoy if you've just come from the Heartless Bitches International site and want to sneer at the feckless alternative.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

HEALTH DATABASES

THE VIRTUAL HOSPITAL
www.vh.org

The VH is primarily a storehouse of cross-referenced information for medical students and full-fledged doctors. The quick diagnostic tools are especially helpful—for MDs and for patients who may want to educate (not to say diagnose) themselves. A recently revamped design makes the site easier to use: Now all it needs is a waiting room with a good snack machine.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

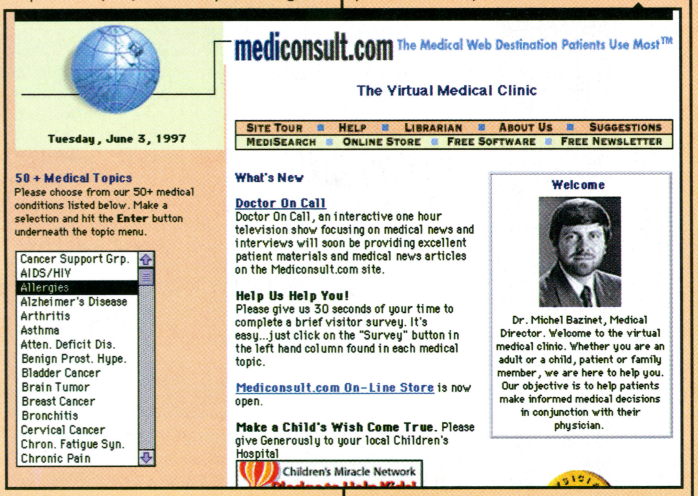
ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE CONNECTION
arxc.com/arxchome.htm

Eighty-sixing your conservative, Harvard-educated doctor in favor of a more enlightened holistic healer? Then click here. The Alternative Medicine Connection offers many commendable features, including Health Hotline (a repository of scientific and political news related to alternative health) and Chapter One (a service that lets you browse the first chapter of a health book before you plunk any money down). The MedSearch function, which promises to locate a holistic health specialist in your area, has potential but thus far lacks a comprehensive database.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

MEDICONSULT.COM
www.mediconsult.com

NEW A searchable database of (count 'em) "50+" medical topics inspires this site to declare itself "The Virtual Medical Clinic." Actually, Mediconsult comes closer to a browsable medical bookstore: It reprints selected journal articles, pamphlets, and chapters from books (some of which are for sale in Mediconsult's shopping area), prescription drug lists, support groups, and more; if you have trouble finding something (and you will), you can take your chances with a moderately reliable search engine.



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

HEALTHANSWERS
www.healthanswers.com

NEW Orbis's HealthAnswers employs a cunning virtual manila folder format to parcel out useful basic information on common ailments and complaints. The information is available at many other sites, but here it's bundled in one place for your convenience. If you're looking for advice on a serious condition, you probably should consult a more specialized authority; but if you need first aid for minor ailments and mishaps like sunburn or an eye-drop overdose, this site won't hurt a bit. Best feature: Health Passport, a health and safety resource for international travelers, organized by country.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

YOUR HEALTH DAILY
nytsyn.com/med

The New York Times Syndicate hosts this page, which maintains postings of current medical news briefs. Older articles are archived in a searchable database, and discussion-group BBSs corresponding to each designated topic (Women's Health, Cancer, AIDS, etc.) are on hand. There aren't any frills or links here—unless, of course, you count the ads.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

ABCS OF SAFE AND HEALTHY CHILD CARE
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/abc/abc.htm

NEW For a whole alphabet of advice on keeping your child out of harm's way, consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Childcare providers, parents, and potential parents will find plenty of information here on accident prevention, basic first aid, proper hygiene, common childhood diseases, and more. If you worry about it, they probably cover it. After all, the only difference between "parent" and "paranoid" is an "oy."

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

KIDSHEALTH.ORG
kidshealth.org

NEW Loaded with exclusive content written for kids and their parents. Adults can read discussions of childhood infections and vaccinations, while youngsters are invited to experiment with healthful-but-fun recipes like Ants on a Log (celery "filled" with peanut butter and topped with raisins) or practice playing computer games in an ergonomically correct way—no more "Nintendo Finger"! The hosts may be well-meaning to a fault, but the site is refreshingly original.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

KIDSDOCTOR
www.kidsdoctor.com

A must-bookmark for parents. The kidsDoctor, Lewis Coffin, MD (an unfortunate name for a healer) doles out quick advice on common kiddie ailments like chickenpox and earaches, and behaviors such as thumbsucking and dirt-eating. Other topics covered: how to remove chewing gum from a tike's hair, and why fruit juice is a no-no. You'll start to feel a little sticky just reading! As if the site were designed by a doting parent, kidsDoctor only links to awards it's won.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

DR. SPIELER'S DENTAL ZONE
www.saveyoursmile.com

Dr. Spieler is a man on a mission to stop periodontal (gum) disease caused by overzealous brushing. To that end he markets the Alert Toothbrush, which lights up when you scrub too hard. Spieler also pens a monthly online newsletter and reprints helpful articles from other sources on taming bad breath, conquering dental fear, teaching children to brush properly, and more. Believe it or don't, this is one of the best dental sites out there.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

RELIGION

NEW ADVENT CATHOLIC SUPERSITE
www.sni.net/advent

NEW Home of the Catholic Encyclopedia, where lapsed and loyal alike can access indexed entries on subjects ranging from major doctrinal tenets to minor hair-splitting debates. If you're a real glutton for devotion, you can immerse yourself in the unabridged version of St. Thomas Aquinas's 13th-century masterpiece, the *Summa Theologica*, or in the writings of dozens of Church Fathers, from Alexander of Alexandria to Zephyrinus.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 5

MORMON HISTORY RESOURCE PAGE
www.indirect.com/www/crockett/history.html

NEW Dig into this musty library of a site to unearth historical documents detailing the life, times, and visions of church founder Joseph Smith; journal entries made by Mormon pioneers; a list of Mormon temples worldwide; a somewhat dry essay on the history of polygamy; and loads of other Mormon stuff. Best oxymoron: Liberty Jail, where Smith and some of his followers were imprisoned in 1838.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

THE GNOSIS ARCHIVE
www.webcom.com/~gnosis

Gnostics recognize the "imperfect" nature of all creation and build a belief system from there. Sound reasonable? Then stop by this site to hear the Gnostic Society's Friday Lecture Series. Browse the Library, where you'll find such weighty tomes as the Nag Hammadi texts and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Gnostic Archive houses a Philip K. Dick FAQ, and articles addressing Hermeticism, Zoroastrianism, and other multisyllabic "isms." Flawed as you are, you still might learn something.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

TORAH.NET
www.torah.net



NEW "For the Jewish surfer on the Net." The current Torah.Net lineup includes the Jewish Youth Corner, a linked directory of tenant sites (many of which are commercial and/or in Hebrew only), and a Halacha answer man. The Weekly Parsha offers meditations on specific issues—the substance of life, wicked laws, defamatory speech, etc. A calendar, news briefs, and a discussion forum are promised. Wobbly spelling adds unintended levity to the proceedings ("Avraham embodied the character trait of loving kinkness").

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

BIBLE STUDY CENTER
members.aol.com/bsc153

NEW This nondenominational Christian center/church brought to you from Irvine, Kentucky, energetically opposes the Scriptural literalism favored by some fundamentalists. The BSC Web page reprints lengthy, combative, thoroughly unpredictable sermons on metaphorical exegesis: One text, for example, begins by examining the symbolic meaning of the number 40 in the Bible and ends up dissing the "gift of tongues." BSC's arguments are idiosyncratic and sometimes inhabit the outer suburbs of logical coherence, but they're always interesting.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2



BY ERIC TYSON

A Fool and His Money

Stock pickers—even media darlings—have a spotty record online

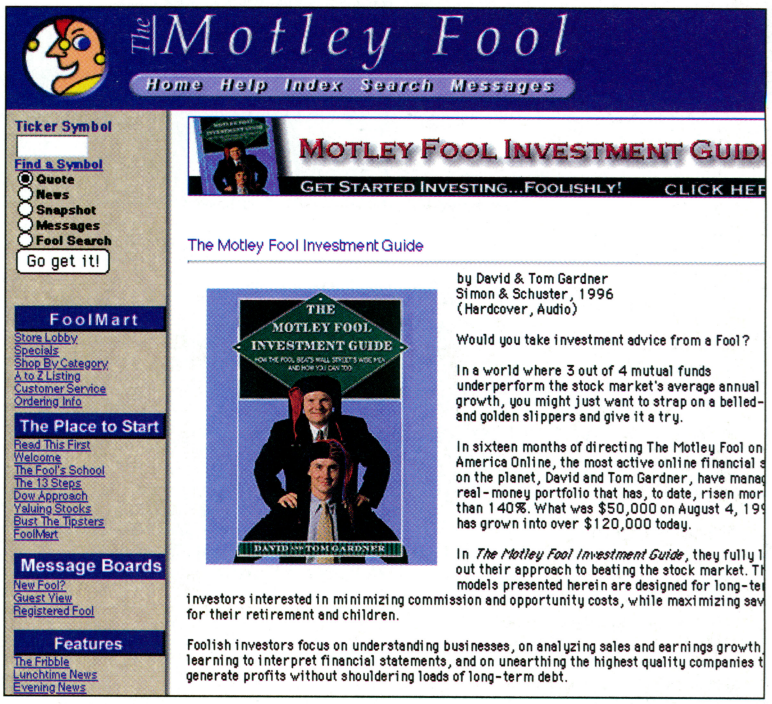
A CAUTIONARY TALE: In 1993, David and Tom Gardner—a couple of generation Xers who had no professional money-management experience—launched a monthly investment newsletter. Discouraged when only a few dozen people subscribed, the Gardners moved out of print and onto America Online. Thus was born the Motley Fool.

The online version, which later migrated to the Web, offered the Fool's daily online commentaries about the stock market. But the real action was on the forum's message boards. These soon filled with stock tips and gossip from investors (and investor wannabes) whose identity, background, and veracity were always somewhat questionable. Then in August of 1994, the brothers put their money where their mouths were: With a starting pool of $50,000, they introduced a portfolio of recommended stocks.

By early 1996, the Gardners were gloating over their returns. Prices for a couple of the Fool's early stock picks—America Online and Iomega—zoomed during the euphoric market for technology stocks; Iomega's stock price quintupled in three months. In its April 23, 1996 report, the Fool was able to brag that its portfolio was up 65% for the year.

The popular business press soon picked up on these amateur stock pickers who seemed to have the Midas touch. A *Time* magazine article gushed that, thanks to the Gardners' brilliant advice, small investors "are beating Wall Street at its own game." *People* magazine ran a story celebrating the Motley Fool's (and the Gardners') ascent to cyber-stardom.

Then came the crash. In a generally rising market, Iomega shares sank from $55 to $17. Some of the Fool's newer stock picks tanked, too: In October 1996, the Gardners recommended buying ATC Communications, then at $22.94; the stock has subsequently plunged to less than $4. Over the most recent trailing 52-week period, the overall value of the Fool portfolio has dropped by 27%; in the same period, the S&P 500 has gone up by 27%.



PLUMMETING PUNDITS

The Gardners aren't the only investment gurus to fall flat on their faces. The financial industry abounds with pundits and newsletter writers who charge for investment advice. But according to *Hulbert's Financial Digest*, not a single investment newsletter has beaten the market averages over the past 15 years. So what should the average investor learn from the Motley Fool story?

Take promises of easy riches with many grains of salt. The Fool's site says, "We hope to have put you in position to nearly double the S&P 500... it'll demand little research per year, and present you little, if any, long-term risk." But if investing in stocks were that easy, we'd all be rich. As any professional money manager knows, successfully managing a portfolio of individual stocks requires more than a few hours of research per year. And though the Fool's proprietors dismiss mutual funds as poor vehicles to success, 1,901 out of 1,907 diversified U.S. stocks funds have outperformed the Fool portfolio over the past year (according to Morningstar's).

Beware of bloated performance claims. The Gardners like to think that their portfolio is more honest than those run by other investment advisers. They repeatedly point out that, unlike these other portfolios, theirs uses real money. They also say they take trading commissions into account when calculating the portfolio's performance. But they leave out one crucial detail: Their portfolio is a nonretirement account, meaning it's subject to the biggest investment cost of all—taxes.

Because the Gardners trade frequently, the Fool portfolio has racked up sizable (and taxable) capital gains. And additional costs are associated with trading individual stocks based on the newsletter's recommendations. To have learned of the Fool's earlier picks, you would have had to pay AOL's online charges. Factoring in taxes and online charges (even if you value your leisure time at zero), you could have done just as well over the Fool's history by investing in a low-cost, tax-friendly index fund that mirrors the market averages. Ironically, the Gardners themselves say, "If you can't beat the index after all costs are deducted, you've blundered."

It's also worth noting that, because of the terrific tax benefits of retirement accounts, you shouldn't consider stock picking until you've fully funded your retirement accounts. Most people, of course, aren't able to save enough to fund their retirement accounts *and* invest more in stocks on their own.

Do as I say, not as I do. "We invest for the long-term." That's the Fool mantra, invoked regularly in the Gardners' portfolio report (almost daily when their portfolio

is performing poorly). They add that "the enduring beauty of long-term equities investing is the advantage of buying and holding—never touching—stocks like General Electric, which rack up 20 percent annualized gains over a decade or more. We're talking compounded returns untainted by capital gains taxes."

But the portfolio's trading history tells another story. On average, the portfolio has dropped seven stocks annually from a portfolio that typically contains only ten. Just a portion of one stock's shares remains from the original Fool portfolio. Moreover, the Gardners engage in risky short selling (where borrowed stock is first sold in the hope that it can be later bought back at a lower price)—and have lost money doing it. This is not long-term investing.

Don't follow the market daily. The Motley Fool rightly criticizes the financial media's short-term reporting: "So many are lost in the day-by-day noise of stock moves." But the Fool itself reports on the biggest stock price changes of the day, not once, but twice a day. This daily tracking of stock prices causes investors to lose sight of the long-term and of the big picture.

The bottom line: Be skeptical of all financial newsletters, online or off. Like politicians, they're out to make themselves look as good as possible, taking credit when things go well and blaming external forces when they don't. The Motley Fool has something to teach us, after all. ■

THE SITES

THE MOTLEY FOOL
www.fool.com
S&P INDEX INFORMATION
www.stockinfo.standardpoor.com/idxinfo.htm

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MONEY Sites | BY ERIC TYSON

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: MONEY ONLINE

NEW An ambitious site nestled in the messy digital sprawl that is Pathfinder. Get stock quotes, follow daily market news (in Money Daily), research companies, and track your portfolio. Online calculators help you figure the depth of your debt, the growth of your investments, and the future size of your nest egg. The links section is annotated, well-organized and easy to navigate. Many of *Money*'s print articles get successful interactive treatment here. For example, rearrange *Money*'s annual "Best Places to Live" list according to how you would weight the criteria, just in case Madison, Wisconsin, doesn't sound like your dream town.



CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 5

www.pathfinder.com/money

CREDIT REPORTING AND MAINTENANCE

EQUIFAX
www.equifax.com
NEW Before a potential lender offers you money, she'll order a copy of your credit report from an agency like Equifax. Problem is, these reports are often riddled with mistakes. If you're a wise borrower, you'll order a copy of your report before applying for a loan. Equifax is one of the Big Three credit reporting companies, and you can order a copy of your report directly from its Web site (cost is $8 for residents of most states). The site's FAQ can tell you more about what credit reports are and how they work.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

EXPERIAN
www.experian.com
NEW Formerly known as TRW, this Big Three agency used to offer free credit reports to anyone who asked. The name isn't the only thing that's changed: Citing "competitive disadvantages," the company now charges $8 apiece for its reports. But if Experian really wanted to be competitive, it would let you order your credit report over its Web site (coming soon, the site claims). In the meantime, you can print out a request letter, read an explanation of credit reports, see a sample of one, and find out what declaring bankruptcy would do to yours.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

TRANS UNION
www.tuc.com
NEW The third of the Big Three U.S. credit reporting companies, Trans Union (like the others) charges $8 for your credit report. But you can't order your report online (as Equifax lets you) or even print out a request letter (as Experian lets you). The Trans Union site seems mostly geared toward the lenders who are checking up on you. If you're a mere "consumer," head for one of the other credit agency sites.
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

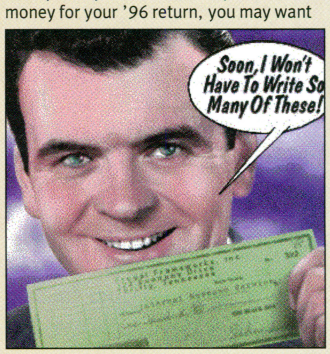
CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICE
www.cccsedu.org
NEW Among the most commonly linked-to sites in the personal finance Web. After all, here's a "nonprofit" organization supposedly dedicated to helping you get out of debt. What few people realize, though, is that about 85% of CCCS's funding comes from the very creditors you owe money to. Small surprise that CCCS counselors urge you into a consolidated debt repayment plan, giving extremely short shrift to other options (like bankruptcy). The lesson here: Check out the organization behind the .org.
CONTENT 1 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 1

DEBT-FREE & PROSPEROUS LIVING
www.debtfree.com
NEW There are big bucks to be had in the business of offering to help people get out of debt: This site functions as an online sales pitch for the Financial Independence Network's Debt-FREE & Prosperous Living Basic Course. "Get completely out of debt, including your home mortgage—in about FIVE years." "Have tens of thousands in investments... in a year or two." How much for all this hype? Just $79 (for a 275-page manual and a set of four audio cassettes). Don't bother.
CONTENT 1 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 1

TAXES

NETTAX '9X
www.nettax.com
NEW NetTax's powerful (and free) online calculator makes testing "what if" scenarios easy. What if I earn a big bonus at the end of year? What if I make an IRA contribution? What if I buy a home and start paying deductible mortgage interest instead of rent? Self-employed people and those making major financial decisions in 1997 will benefit most. And if you're still on a filing extension for your 1996 return, you can download tax forms here.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

IRS
www.irs.ustreas.gov
NEW It's probably the last thing on your mind, but planning ahead for your '97 tax returns now can save you some money and headaches down the road. For example, if you owed or overpaid a lot of money for your '96 return, you may want to adjust your tax withholding for '97. The solution: Grab a W-4 form on the Forms and Pubs part of the IRS Web site, and give it to your employer.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4



1040.COM
www.1040.com
NEW The "Taxing Subjects" section of this site contains useful resources for tax planning, including information on which IRS publications have been discontinued and where you can now find those instructions, a summary of new tax law changes, and a clearly laid out table of all the new rates and figures for social security in 1997. It's never too early.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

SMALL BUSINESS TAXES AND MANAGEMENT
www.smbiz.com
NEW The online version of *The Small Business Tax Review*, a publication that's been providing tax and management guidance to small and medium-size businesses since 1980. Updated several times a month, it features detailed information—IRS interest rates, corporate and individual tax rates, vehicle mileage and depreciation tables, etc.—for '97 tax planning. An extensive library of articles on business tax planning covers such tough topics as deducting start-up costs.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

MORTGAGE INFO

HOMEPATH
www.homepath.com
NEW One of the few real estate sites that discusses both the pros and the cons of owning a home. For example, when deciding whether you can afford a residence, the site reminds you to consider any upcoming "big ticket" items you might need (such as a new car). "You don't want to move into your new home with all your savings depleted," it wisely points out. Sponsored by Fannie Mae (reviewed below), the site does have some flaws: In figuring how much lenders will lend you, the "How Much House Can You Afford?" calculator applies simplistic percentages—which have nothing to do with how much you can truly afford.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
www.hud.gov
NEW A typical government site: No style but lots of substance. Go here for information on special federal programs relating to mortgages—from Veterans Administration loans and rural housing service programs to reverse mortgages. And check out the consumer pamphlets on various home-buying topics, as well as info on Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance programs, which make home ownership possible for more Americans. Extensive links put you in touch with other housing agencies' sites.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

LENDERS INTERACTIVE SERVICES
www.lendersinteractive.com
NEW Who knew that you could borrow money for so many different things? LIS's online database matches your loan request to a list of lenders specializing in that type of loan. And the range is enormous: accounts receivable, bridge loans, buyout or acquisition, consumer loans, franchises, home equity loans, import/export, inventory, leasing, mortgages, purchase orders, real estate development, revolving loans, student loans, venture

capital, tax exchange, and many others. A helpful onsite FAQ addresses how to fill out loan applications.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

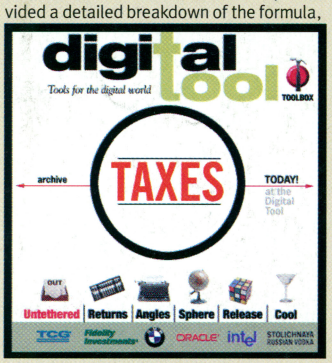
FANNIE MAE
www.fanniemae.com
NEW Fannie Mae is the world's largest diversified financial company and the nation's largest source of home mortgage funds. So how come you've never heard of it? The company doesn't deal directly with home buyers; instead it backs local mortgage lenders. Still, regular folks can search the site for recently foreclosed homes now owned by Fannie Mae. There is also a good overview of Fannie Mae's reverse mortgage programs, which can help older homeowners generate income from their home equity.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

THE MORTGAGE LOAN PAGE
www.loanpage.com
NEW Here's your chance to search mortgage companies by name, geographical area, or specialty (first-time buyers, second mortgages, vacation properties, etc.). On the downside, the site doesn't screen or review the companies. Still, the Loan Page is a convenient way to start comparing available terms, especially if your property scares off some lenders.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

MORTGAGE MARKET
www.interest.com
NEW Mortgage Market Information Services, which supplies mortgage and real estate information to more than 300 newspapers, does its part for Web surfers as well. All you have to do is choose your desired loan type (30-year fixed, 5-year adjustable, etc.), and Mortgage Market will supply a sampling of interest rates and upfront fees (known as points) from lenders in your state. Another section links to 100 newspapers. Shorefront property in Asbury Park, N.J., anyone?
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

MAGAZINES

FORBES MAGAZINE
www.forbes.com
NEW The online Forbes Magazine shows how a paper periodical can really take advantage of the Web. Example: A recent print article outlined a new stock valuation formula; the Web version provided a detailed breakdown of the formula,



complete with corresponding tables. The paper *Forbes*' famous lists also become interactive online, so you can search the 400 richest people in America by state, industry, net worth, age, or even marital status. Hmmmm.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

WORTH
www.worth.com
NEW *Worth* is an intelligent print publication that often features hard-hitting financial journalism—but you wouldn't know that from its Web site. You'll find a single piece from the current print copy of the magazine—and not always the best article, either. Witness the recent hokey piece on "trophy homes." The online layouts are unimaginative, with long, thin, difficult-to-read columns, acres of empty space, and absolutely no interactivity.
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 1 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

SMART MONEY
www.dowjones.com/smart
NEW With an attractive layout and a contents page full of interesting feature titles, Smart Money looks promising. But the site is only an elaborate advertisement for the current month's print copy. Click on a feature title and you get a one-paragraph summary. The most developed areas are the "Top XV Reasons to Subscribe to *Smart Money*" and "*Smart Money*'s Ultimate Gift Guide." You'd think the folks at Dow Jones would know better.
CONTENT 1 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 1

CONSUMER PROTECTION

CONSUMER WORLD
www.consumerworld.org
A collection of more than 1,400 consumer resources on the Net. The focus tends to be on sites that tell you "how low can you go": low mortgage rates, low airfares, low credit card rates, low prices on automobiles, etc. Consumer World also collects solid consumer protection information: how to file a consumer complaint, how to locate a Better Business Bureau, and how to contact a company's customer service department. Don't miss the regularly updated listings of dangerous new scams.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

INVESTOR PROTECTION TRUST
investorprotection.org
NEW Founded in 1993 as part of a settlement with Salomon Brothers to resolve securities misconduct charges, the IPT provides noncommercial investor education materials and helps the feds prosecute securities fraud. Similarly, the trust's online presence points to investor protection resources on the Net and lets you check up on all kinds of financial pros, from stockbrokers to financial advisors. When you're done playing watchdog, dip into "Investing 101" for helpful articles like "Questions to ask before investing" and "How to read a prospectus."
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

CARDTRAK
www.cardtrak.com
Most of us could be savvier about our credit card use, and a visit to CardTrak would be a good first step. The site surveys low-rate cards (you're probably paying more interest than you need to) and spells out "seven card tricks you should know." If you're smart enough to pay your credit card bills in full each month, the site can also help you find no-fee cards. Beware, however, of the ads for debt counseling firms: Many of these "counselors" are sponsored by credit card issuers, who won't tell you about the benefits of bankruptcy.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

THE WEB Magazine Online goes daily!

We've given birth to twins!
Come by for a visit. Bring gifts. (Or at least feedback.)

What's New

Be the first to know!

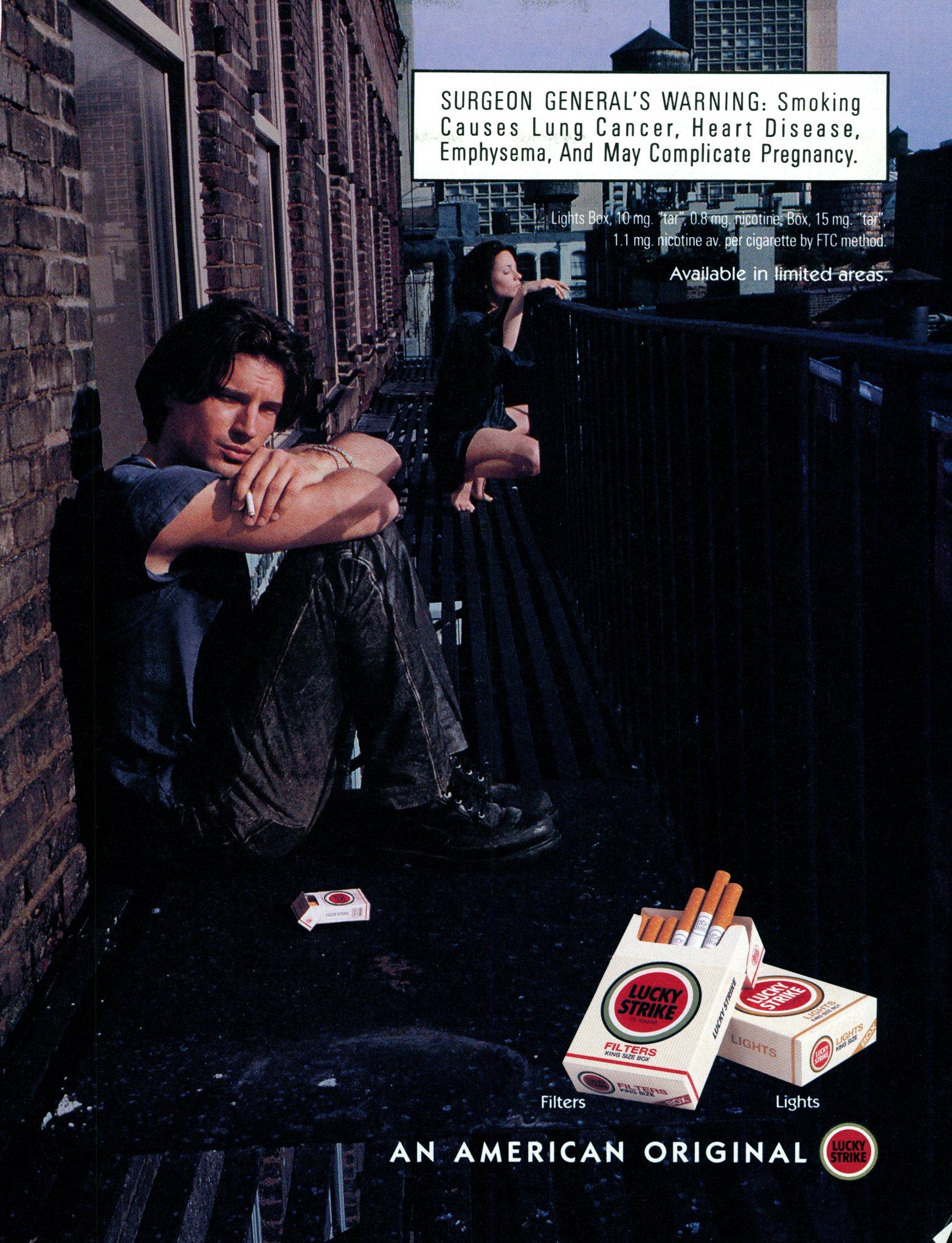
Presenting daily reviews of the best new sites to hit the Web. We have exclusive access to all sites registered with Submit It!, the Web's most popular site announcement service. We work together to let you know about the Web's most browseworthy locales, within days of their birth.

What's On Now

Be there when it happens!

Our site already gives you access to LiveWorld Production's up-to-the-minute directory of online events. Now, THE WEB Magazine Online serves up our own Editor's Choices. Each week, we highlight the most happening events you won't want to miss.


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LUCKY
STRIKE


SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.
Lights Box, 10 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine; Box, 15 mg. "tar", 1.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
Available in limited areas.
LUCKY STRIKE
FILTERS
KING SIZE BOX
LIGHTS
Filters
Lights
AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL
LUCKY STRIKE

BY CALEB MESA

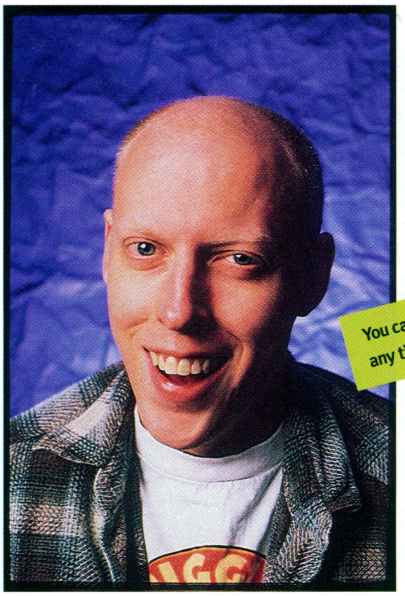
Sounds Like Do-It-Yourself Spirit

The Offspring and a Butthole Surfer spin their own Web radio shows

WHY DO RADIO STATIONS play the same songs over and over? Why do announcers have such annoying voices? Why can't you tune into a decent independent radio show that pipes good music 24 hours a day?

Clearly, radio needs a shakeup. Even musicians—whose careers depend partly on the whims of program directors and their narrow playlists—remain skeptical of radio stations, even as they rely on them for exposure.

So it's no surprise that King Coffey, longtime drummer for the Butthole Surfers (a band whose very name limits its airplay) has started his own Internet radio program. Called Brainwash, after one of Coffey's favorite songs (by '80s punk band Flipper), the weekly show presents hour-long slices of the drummer's favorite music, accessible via RealAudio.



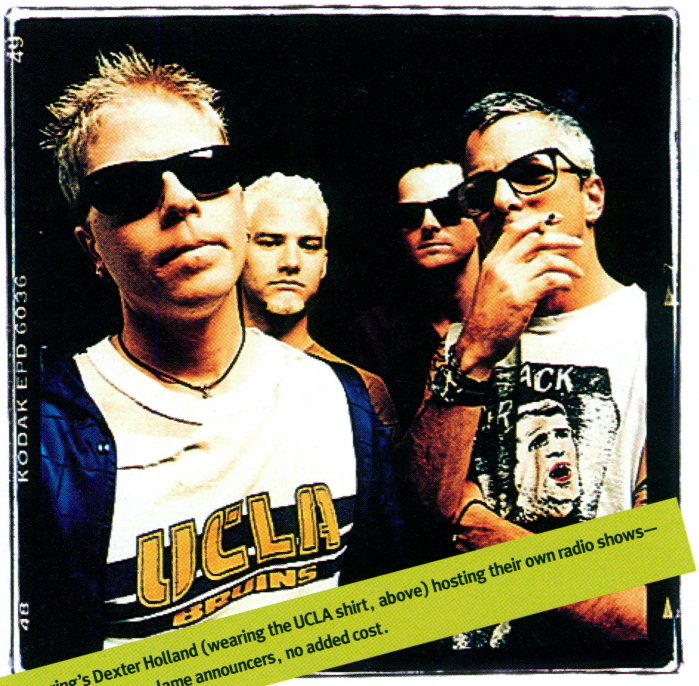
"Everybody who really likes music dreams... of taking over a radio station with guns to broadcast their own music, [but] in most countries—and maybe even the Republic of Texas—that's illegal," Coffey says. "What's great about the Web is, you don't have to [play the same songs everyone else does].... It's kind of like community radio at its best."

HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR COFFEY?

If so, the community in question must be pretty diverse. Coffey plays everything from the Folk Implosion to the Gap Band—and those are two of the better known acts. "I'll never repeat a song," he says. In fact, the only traditions at Brainwash are ending with the show's namesake track and playing at least one Texas punk rock song per hour.

"If you tuned in," Coffey says, "you'd hear a mixture of what I think is happening in the world of scuzzy American indie-rock and happening independent-label techno and jungle stuff and world music from all over—some pop music from the '60s from India or more contemporary stuff from Africa—to funky records that we all know and love from the '70s or '60s." The only thing he hasn't played is a Butthole Surfers song.

Coffey got the idea for Brainwash when he read that one of his own band's shows was going to be broadcast over the Internet. "I was wondering how in the world they can broadcast audio over the Internet, and I thought about it a bit more and thought, 'Wait a minute, what if we had a radio station?'" He downloaded RealAudio and discovered "a virtual world of programming of all types from all over the world." Then he asked Mellie Price, president of Monsterbit, the Austin, Texas, company that runs the Surfers' Web site, if she could help him start his own virtual station.



You can hear the Butthole Surfers' King Coffey (left) and the Offspring's Dexter Holland (wearing the UCLA shirt, above) hosting their own radio shows—any time and from any place—on their respective Web sites. No commercials, no lame announcers, no added cost.

Monsterbit handles the technical things, so Coffey can broadcast with little more than two turntables and a microphone. Every other week, he records a show into a DAT machine, and then gives it to Monsterbit to be transferred onto the Web site. "It's a cross between the DJ format and a mix tape," Coffey says.

More importantly, Brainwash presents a mix tape that's available to the entire world—at no or low cost. "Computer technology has gotten cheaper and it's kind of punk rock; it lets people make really great-sounding stuff without spending a lot of money," Coffey says. "There was a great band from Austin called the Big Boys. Their catchphrase was 'Okay, now start your own band.' I kind of feel that way about Brainwash. Now start your own radio station."

OFFSPRING ONLINE

Plenty of folks have taken that advice: Yahoo lists hundreds of RealAudio stations on the Web, and Coffey isn't even the only rock star using the Internet to rewrite the rules of radio. Punk rock megasellers the Offspring have created a faux-radio station called KFUK (punk, huh?) that plays a continuous stream of Offspring songs on their Web site. By clicking hypertext buttons to "stroke" or "whack" the band's tracks, Net surfers can alter the station's playlist. And you have a choice of songs from their most recent album, *Ixnay on the Hombre*, back to 1992's *Ignition*.

Not only is the station interactive, but online voters can influence the band's real-life playlist as well. "They're really voting for a song called "L.A.P.D." off a

record we did [a couple of years ago]," says Offspring frontman Dexter Holland, who adds that the results sometimes surprise him. "When [the song] came up, we started rehearsing it at sound-check again. Maybe we'll throw it in at a show somewhere."

And though KFUK appeals only to fans of all Offspring all the time, it uses the Net to subvert the top-down style of traditional media. Here, you can tune in to the choices of a trusted musician, or even fellow fans. The radio page, in fact, is just one subset of the band's humorously subversive site, which starts with the band's racy disclaimer, interjects some advice for raising hell, and solicits you to buy the band's merchandise.

The do-it-yourself attitude thrives online. "It's democratizing speech, culture, and art," says Coffey. "It's just me alone in a room with a microphone, but I feel like the whole world is listening. So I have to be a bit drunk to do it."

THE SITES

BRAINWASH
www.monsterbit.com/brainwash
THE OFFSPRING'S KFUK PIRATE RADIO
www.offspring.com/radio/radio.cgi

Caleb Mesa *is a contributing editor to* THE WEB Magazine. *Address e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*



MUSIC Sites | BY ERIC HELLWEG

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: WALL OF SOUND

NEW Not to be confused with Phil Spector's signature production techniques, the Wall of Sound mounts its own onslaught of news, CD reviews, interviews, music charts, feature stories, and artist profiles. Brought to you by the same folks who do Mr. Showbiz (Starwave), the site skews heavily toward rock-pop (Depeche Mode, Courtney Love, U2, and Aerosmith when we checked in), but also covers country (George Strait) and R&B (Babyface). The charts tabulate the latest hits by region/area and label, not by genre, which offers insights into the way the music machine works. The site also includes a very solid search feature. The downside: WoS does not venture beyond its own walls—bad news for links fans.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5



File Next To: The Damned, Venom, and *Tales From the Crypt*

www.wallofsound.com

LOUNGE

CLUB VELVET
www2.bitstream.net/~clean

NEW If he's king of anything, it's suave. King Kini is the proprietor of Club Velvet, a lavishly designed site aimed at preserving the too-hip world where acts like Dean Martin and Martin Denny reign supreme. Listen to hours of RealAudio lounge sets, brush up on cocktail recipes, and view some of the coolest—and most absurd—album covers ever. Is that guy next to Sammy Davis, Jr., in the photograph really Kini? A couple more Velvetinis, and we'll believe anything.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

THE ROOTS OF LOUNGE
www.gonix.com/rol

NEW "In a world where rebellion is obsolete, easy listening music is without a doubt the most subversive sonic genre to come along since Gregorian Chants." Read all about the history of lounge music, written in an academic yet entertaining voice, with great links sprinkled throughout the text. Read the Lounge/Not Lounge chart (à la Wired/Tired), and luxuriate in the Easy Listening record reviews.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

HIP HOP

THE KRIB
www.trader.com/users/5013/1723/krib.htm

NEW Few genres of music are so misunderstood and so misrepresented as hip hop. And while the Web has done much to spread the real hip-hop message, it's also been used to propagate rumors, lies, and urban legends. The Krib proves how much stuff—positive and negative—is out there by posting up-to-date concert listings (courtesy of *Pollstar*), pending release dates, links to mix tape sites, radio shows listed by city, chat rooms, charts, and often biting album reviews. The phat links are divided into categories as diverse as graffiti, fashion, record labels, and magazines.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

THE BLACK COUNTDOWN
www.galactica.it/101/black

NEW Ever wrack your brain and wreck your rewind button trying to figure out where Wu-Tang Clan got that *one* sample? Interested in finding out who Sean "Puffy" Combs has produced? Save some time (and your tape deck) with The Black Countdown's exhaustively researched site. The Producers section profiles more than 7,000 producer/artists; the Samples section shows who's sampled whom; and the Rap Database acts as a virtual family tree for the genre.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

FOR MUSICIANS

MB INTERACTIVE SOUND SYSTEM
mbinter.com/ss7x7

Think you're the next Tricky? Experimenting with your own jungle/jazz/techno/house sounds? Now you can lay down deep grooves with the MBI Sound System. This Shockwave-based music mixer could be the center of the party, or invisibly provide the background vibes. Choose from eight modules, each modeled loosely after a mixing board, replete with channels, volume knobs, and pseudo-LCD displays. Want to fill the room with real tiger-and-lion jungle sounds? Check out the Naturmax module.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

OUTER SOUND
www.outersound.com

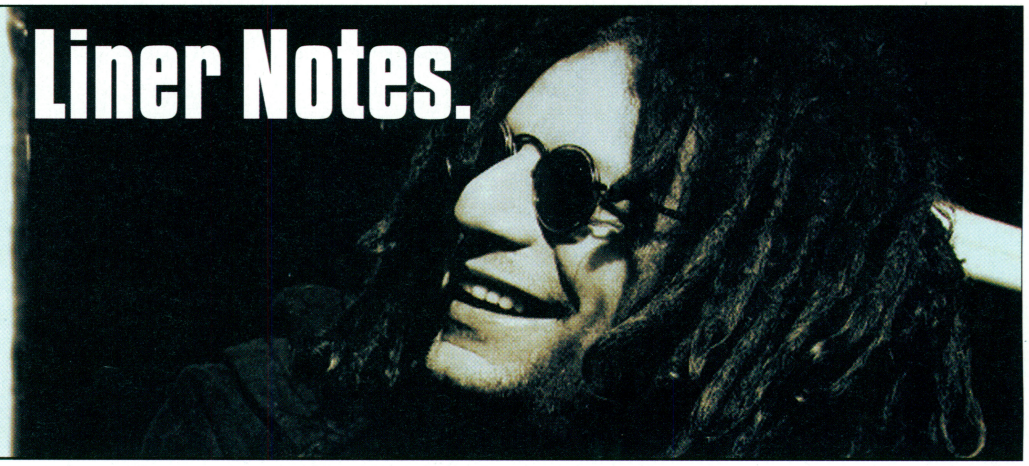
NEW Your indie band's been practicing for weeks, driving your neighbors crazy, and now you're ready to... do what? What's the first step? Outer Sound walks you through finding a studio, dealing with club owners, and writing press kits, with links to numerous indie bands (including press clips, audio samples, and bios) and

Don Was, is Liner Notes.

Get the inside track. Visit Liner Notes, the online music documentary series by Grammy winning producer Don Was.

www.real.com/linernotes

real™ Only in video



music magazines (including contact information!). The site's designed in a quaint "town" format; too bad the buildings/sections are so small that you can easily click on the wrong one.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

JUST ABOUT MUSIC

www.justaboutmusic.com

NEW If it were all "just about the music," we wouldn't need this site. Unfortunately, succeeding in today's music biz requires industry know-how. Put together by a "platinum-selling" musician and producer, Just About Music is essentially a come-on for the bimonthly *J.A.M.* newsletter ($30 per year). Nonetheless, you will find free informative columns explaining what to watch out for when you sign with a label, plus artist interviews and even a quiz to take just before you step into Mr. Geffen's office.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

MUSICIANSNET

www.futurenet.com/musiciansnet/default.asp

NEW MusicansNet is like a guitarist who can play the first few riffs of the hits, but flubs the rest. This flashy site immediately catches your eye with its five categories—guitar, bass, keyboards, drums,



and hi-tech— each containing excellent interviews and tips culled from various publications. But beyond some classifieds, you'll find nothing else of any consequence.

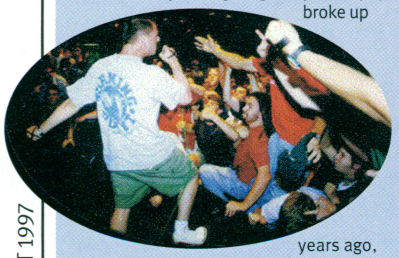
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

PUNK SITES

STRAIGHT-EDGE

www.straight-edge.com

NEW Back in the early '80s a few hardcore bands—like Minor Threat—espoused the "straight-edge" life: no drinking, no drugs, no promiscuous sex. Though most of the bands promulgating this philosophy broke up



years ago, straight edge remains a force in music, helping wayward youths find solidarity through clean living and riotous music. Read a history of the music, scan some disc reviews, thrash your way through hundreds of links, or sound off on the active message board.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

BAN EVERYTHING: JELLO BIAFRA

minyos.its.rmit.edu.au/~chriskat/jello

NEW The man who once sang "Blow it out your ass, Jerry Falwell!" rarely lacks an opinion. Jello Biafra, erstwhile leader of the seminal San Francisco punk band the Dead Kennedys (and current owner of the Alternative Tentacles record label) is a staunch defender of civil rights. This site links to interviews with Jello conducted over the past 16 years, as well as providing pictures, reviews, guitar tabs, and lyrics to classic DK tunes.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

HOW TO PLAY PUNK GUITAR

www.angelfire.com/pages0/guitpage

NEW No, this is not a two-page site—one for each chord. Instead, it contains five basic guitar lessons and some general punk advice. After you've run through the lessons, you won't be ready to gun down Eric Clapton in a quick-draw contest, but you will be up and strumming. True to the DIY spirit, spelling errors abound, and the white-text-on-black-background design gives haphazard a good name.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

WOMEN IN MUSIC

THE GOGIRLS HOMEPAGE

www.cyber-sites.com/gogirls

NEW The most frustrating thing facing women musicians today: dealing with idiot males who frequent music stores, clubs, and record labels. Or so say the simpatico contributors to the GoGirls Homepage. Read horror stories of music-shop chauvinism, learn where *not* to do your hunting for sounds, and check out some women band links. Go on, sister!



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

THE WOMEN OF 70S PUNK

www.comnet.ca/~rina

NEW Women are very well represented in today's punk soundscape—see Lunachicks, L7, Bikini Kill, and Sleater-Kinney, for example—and they've been an integral part of the scene since the '70s. Here you'll find essays on the subject, bios of pioneering bands (some with sound samples), quotes, liner notes, discographies, and wacky fashion shots (as Debbie Harry put it, "Check out those shoes"). Rina, the host of this site, also chronicles punk and new wave in general (that means boys, too), and supplies links to some grrrl rock sites.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

MIDI

THE MIDI FARM

www.midifarm.com

NEW If ol' MacDonald had a farm like this, he'd be singing a lot more than E-I-E-I-O. With over 4,000 MIDI files to choose from—arranged alphabetically by artist, and by karaoke category—you won't run out of tunes to hum either. This homey site sports a newsletter with reviews of different MIDI products, as well as hundreds of MIDI-related links for buying hardware and software. If you can't find what you need, post your concern on the BBS or enter the live chat.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

MIDI WORLD

www.midiworld.com

NEW Ever log onto a site and immediately start hearing cheesy synth tunes? Blame it on MIDI. What exactly is MIDI, you ask? Think of it as a language that lets electronic instruments talk to each other and to your computer. If you don't know MIDI from Atari, peruse MIDI World's MIDI Basics—an excellent (if slightly outdated) primer on digital sounds. If you're already a sequencer expert, check out the hundreds of free and shareware links, manufacturers' pages, and classified ads. No links to artists' pages—too bad.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

CLASSICAL MIDI ARCHIVES

www.prs.net/midi.html

NEW Though most of your favorite classical composers died years ago, they are still making money (for other people) on expensive classical CDs. Next time you crave one of Bach's chorales, skip the CD store and head over here for free—albeit Moog-like—renditions of his switched-on oeuvre. CMA offers selections for every letter of the alphabet—plus separate sections covering Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Debussy, Handel, Haydn, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Mozart, Scarlatti, and others—a total of 3,500 classical MIDI choices altogether.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE MIDI WORLD TOUR

home.hwsys.com/users/glenn/pages/worldmid.htm

NEW Around the (MIDI) world in 50 sites! Unconnected to the MIDI World site, The MIDI World Tour compiles, ranks, and reviews diverse MIDI Web sites. Scroll down the list to see sites rated from 1 to 5 stars, with accompanying descriptions of the musical genres (Methodist to Metallica) available. We were duly pleased to find versions of Gary Numan's "Cars" and Patsy Cline's "I Fall to Pieces."

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

ARTIST PAGES

HYPERRUST NEVER SLEEPS

hyperrust.org

Don't confuse this site with Hyperreal (the raver's online resource)—though with Neil Young's roving musical directions, it's anyone's guess what he's up to these days. In any case, Hyperrust is a harvest of newsgroup and mailing list posts related to various aspects of Neil—tours, new releases, discographies, reviews, sightings, lyrics, chords, and links. Exhaustively researched. Guess his fans never sleep, either.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 3 OVERALL 5



NUWORLD: THE OFFICIAL GARY NUMAN WEB SITE

www.numan.co.uk

NEW Old musicians never die, they just get Web pages. In Gary Numan's case, he's done it himself. Along with Eno and Glass, Numan is the godfather of today's electronica scene. His late 1970s singles—especially "Cars" and "We Are Glass"—combined cold droning vocals and an obsession with technology. His dark Web site offers Numan news (like his planned autobiography) and interviews, Numan gear (T-shirts and such), plus sound clips from his next album, *Exile*.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

ON THE STRENGTH OF THE DOO RAG

www.grandroyal.com/BeastieBoys

In the beginning they were juvenile Jerky Boys prototypes set to a hip-hop beat. From such humble origins, the Beastie Boys have become Godfathers of the music scene—owning a record label (Grand Royal), cofounding the Milarepa organization, and publishing their own magazine. Read their story, check tour dates and lyrics, or view early TV appearances at this site.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

BABYFACE

members.aol.com/icefm/babyface.htm

With schoolboy good looks, an arsenal of hooks, and a voice as smooth as a baby's *tuckus*, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmunds took home three Grammies this year. But his fan base isn't limited to screaming teens: Musicians clamor for his songwriting, too. This site tracks his career with text and photos, but no sound samples.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

RESOURCES

MASS MUSIC

www.mass-music.com

NEW How do you make your record store seem like a music zine? Add your own top-pick lists and RealAudio reviews of recent releases. Truth be told, this is an enormous online music store with scores of titles (in CD, cassette, or vinyl format) that offers overnight delivery. Most discs cost around $10, and you can preview your purchase(s) via RealAudio listening booths and even link to online used record stores. The zine stuff is an afterthought, though it did include a Pavement interview with audio clips when we checked.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

SOUNDZ

www.soundz.com

Billing itself as "the music nexus," Soundz neatly categorizes and organizes all things musical—interviews, webcasts, reviews, links by genre or artist, venue information, daily news, and original features. The intuitive grouping sets it apart from Addicted to Noise and similar sites. Once you've selected a genre, you can dive deeper into bands, labels, magazines, etc. Check out the "musicians only" area for resources and photos.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

THE COLLEGE 500

www.c500.com

NEW You're driving on a cool clear night when your radio picks up a staticky college station around the 89 FM mark. It's playing a fantastic song you've never heard before. Then some mealy-mouthed, postpubescent kid announces the band's name, and you can't make it out. Arggggh! Head for the College 500, where you'll find Top 30, 40, and 50 charts of what's playing on college radio stations, divided by genre (including metal, jazz, hip hop, and ambient), with some RealAudio samples.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

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Mail to: Branco International, Inc.
91 Main Street
Kings Park, NY 11754
1-888-CDWATCH

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

How to make your car invisible to radar and laser...*legally!*

Rocky Mountain Radar introduces a device guaranteed to make your car electronically "invisible" to speed traps—if you get a ticket while using the product, the manufacturer will pay your fine!

by Phil Jones



The Spirit II will "jam" radar, preventing police from measuring your speed.

If your heart doesn't skip a beat when you drive past a speed trap—even if you aren't speeding—don't bother reading this. I can't tell you how many times that has happened to me. Driving down the interstate with my cruise control set at eight miles over the limit, I catch a glimpse of a police car parked on the side of the road. My heart skips a beat and for some reason I look at my speedometer. After I have passed the trap, my eyes stay glued to my rear view mirror, praying the police officer will pass me up for a "bigger fish."

It seems that as speed-detection technology has gotten more and more advanced, speeding tickets have become virtually unavoidable. And although devices exist that enable motorists to detect these speed traps, they are outlawed in many states... including mine.

The solution. Today, Rocky Mountain Radar offers drivers like me a perfect solution—the Spirit II. Utilizing a passive radar scrambler, The Spirit II makes your automobile electronically "invisible" to police speed-detecting equipment.

The radar scrambler works by mixing an X, K or Ka radar signal with an FM "chirp" and bouncing it back at the squad car by way of a waveguide antenna, effectively confusing the computer inside the radar gun.

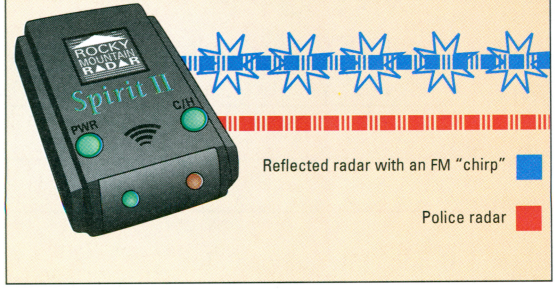
Perfectly legal. Some radar devices have been outlawed because they *transmit* scrambling radar beams back to the waiting law enforcement vehicle. The Spirit II, however, *reflects* a portion of the signal plus an added FM signal back to the police car. This, in effect, gives the waiting radar unit an electronic "lobotomy." Best of all, unless you are a resident of Minnesota, Oklahoma or Washington, D.C., using the Spirit II is completely within your legal rights.

Shown actual size, the Spirit II is only 2.5"W x 3.8"L x 1"H!



How it scrambles radar. Police radar takes five to 10 measurements of a vehicle's speed in about one second. The Spirit II sends one signal that tells the radar the car is going 15 m.p.h. and another signal that the car is going 312 m.p.h. Because police radar can't verify the speed, it displays no speed at all. *To the radar gun, your car isn't even on the road.*

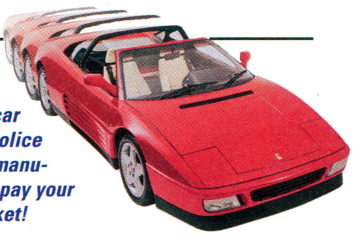
Scrambles Radar



HOW TO MAKE YOUR CAR DISAPPEAR

Radar and laser scramblers are devices that foil speed traps by making vehicles electronically "invisible" to police radar. Radar scramblers mix a portion of the radar signal with background clutter and reflect it back to the squad car. This technique, pioneered by Rocky Mountain Radar, creates an unreadable signal that confuses the computer inside the radar gun.

The laser scrambler in the Phazer works in a similar manner. It transmits a special infrared beam with information designed to scramble the laser signal. The result? Readouts on police radar and laser guns remain blank. As far as the police officer is concerned, your vehicle is not even on the road.



The Spirit II makes your car invisible to police radar or the manufacturer will pay your speeding ticket!

Range up to three miles. The Spirit II begins to scramble radar signals as far as three miles away from the speed trap. Its range of effectiveness extends to almost 100 feet away from the police car, at which point you should be able to make visual contact and reduce your speed accordingly.

Encourage responsible driving. While the Spirit II *is* designed to help you (and me) avoid speed traps, it *is not* intended to condone excessive speeding. For that reason, there is an optional one-year Ticket Rebate Program for just $19.95, the manufacturer will pay tickets where the speed limit was not exceeded by more than 30%, or 15 miles per hour, whichever is less.



3"W x 4"L x 1.5"H

Double protection from speed traps. Radar isn't the only weapon the police use in their revenue-generating speed traps. The latest weapon in their arsenal is the Lidar gun. To counter the latest threat, Rocky Mountain Radar created the Phazer. Like the Spirit II, the Phazer also scrambles laser in a similar manner as the radar scrambler. It uses light-emitting diodes (LEDs) to fire invisible infrared pulses. It confuses the computer inside the laser gun by giving false indication of the car's distance, blocking measurement of your speed. It includes the exclusive Ticket Rebate Program.



4"W x 4"L x 1.5"H

Triple your protection against speed traps. If either the Spirit II or the Phazer sounds good, but you prefer to be *notified* when you are in range of a police radar, the Phantom is for you. The Phantom combines the Phazer (including the Ticket Rebate Program) with a radar detector. It's legal in every state except Minnesota, Oklahoma, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Ask your representative for more details!

Risk-free. Thanks to Rocky Mountain Radar, speed traps don't make my heart skip a beat anymore. Try the Spirit II, the Phazer or the Phantom yourself. They're all backed by our risk-free trial and a three-year manufacturer's warranty. If you're not satisfied, return them within 90 days for a full "No Questions Asked" refund.

The Spirit II . . . . . **$99** $9 S&H
The Phazer . . . . . **$199** $14 S&H
The Phantom . . . . . **$349** $18 S&H

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BY SUZAN REVAH

Congressional Pages

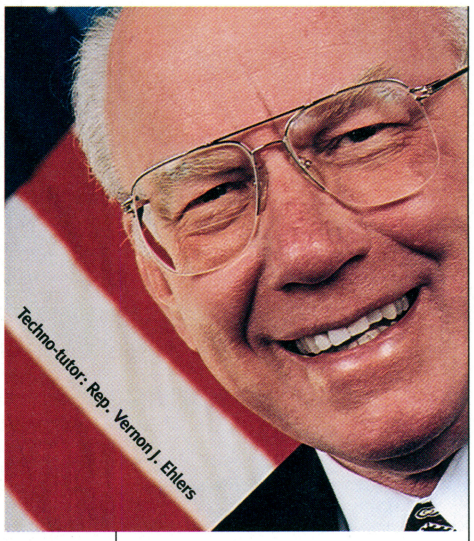
The Internet Caucus drags Congress into the Digital Age

NOT SO LONG AGO, techies were techies and politicians were politicians. Now, however, thanks to the efforts of the Congressional Internet Caucus (CIC), plenty of people on Capitol Hill are wearing both hats. This nod of recognition toward the digital revolution is all the more surprising because it comes from Congress, an institution notorious for its resistance to change.

The caucus was inspired by the passage in February 1996 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA), criminalizing the computerized display of "indecent" or "patently offensive" material in any corner of cyberspace accessible to children. Congress took a lot of heat for passing that bill, especially when it later emerged that only a handful of the 505 senators and representatives who voted in favor of the CDA had ever logged onto the Internet.

NONPARTISAN ACCESS

Which is where the CIC comes in. Founded by four Net-savvy members of Congress—Representatives Rick White (R-WA) and Rick Boucher (D-VA), along with Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and former Senator Larry Pressler (R-SD)—the CIC encourages members of Congress to take their first steps across the fabled bridge to the 21st century, providing hands-on training seminars and informal briefings on timely high-tech issues such as encryption, online commerce, and copyright protection. In doing so, lawmakers can witness for themselves that the Internet is more than just a home for perverts and pedophiles and presumably make more informed decisions about its regulation in the future. But at least for now, the CIC (located on the World Wide Web at www.house.gov/white/internet_caucus/netcauc.html) won't subscribe to particular views on specific issues.



Techno-tutor: Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers

"One of the criticisms of the caucus is that it's not a policy-driver, but that was never its goal," says Jonah Seiger, communications director of the Center for Democracy and Technology. "The CIC was designed to create a forum where questions can be asked without feeling stupid." The nonpartisan stance may also be a matter of survival. Many insiders say that the caucus would fall apart if it were forced to take positions on such contentious issues as encryption and censorship.

To join the caucus, members must sign a pledge promising to get online within 90 days of joining, to make Congress more accessible online, to urge colleagues to get educated about cyberspace, and to network with the Internet community and seek its input on Internet-related issues. An advisory committee made up of a cross-section of public interest groups and Internet industry representatives provides guidance and logistical support to the CIC, which currently totals 91 members—a big increase from the 20 who were enrolled when the caucus began in March of last year.

"We're never going to have everyone thinking alike as to the value of the Internet," says Senator Leahy, "but at least now they are thinking about it."

Leahy, who is often described as America's first "cybersenator," acknowledges that "some people join caucuses just for the sake of joining caucuses." But he's been pleasantly surprised by the number of his colleagues who tell him the caucus has increased their awareness of the democratizing potential of the Internet.

> **It used to be that members didn't even know what a Web page was, whereas now they're saying, "My page is better than yours."** — REPRESENTATIVE VERNON J. EHLERS

Considering that Congress often takes years to craft a single piece of legislation, the CIC has made some dramatic progress in its short history. When the 104th Congress arrived in Washington two years ago, explains Chris Casey, a self-described "Internet evangelist and hand-holder" for the Senate Democratic Policy Committee, the House and Senate couldn't communicate electronically with one another, much less with the rest of the online world. Today, some 85 senators and 200 representatives at least have e-mail addresses, if not homepages. Some members even answer their e-mail personally, though most leave the task to staffers or reply to e-mail inquiries via snail mail.

"It used to be that members didn't even know what a Web page was," says Representative Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI), a CIC member who holds regular Internet training seminars for less wired colleagues, "whereas now they're saying, 'My page is better than yours.'"

Internet awareness may have improved, and a new Hill culture of online chic may have emerged, but Congress still has a long way to go. For instance, citizens looking to Congressional Web sites for more than basic PR information—for example, to track the day-to-day activities of congressional committees—will undoubtedly be disappointed. Part of the problem is that the CIC is starving for resources: In 1996 the 104th Congress eliminated funding for legislative service organizations—including caucuses.

"Congress is never going to be the place to look for bleeding edge

or ahead-of-the-curve uses of technology," says Casey, author of a book called *The Hill on the Net: Congress Enters the Information Age*. "Congress will always be one or many steps behind, but the CIC is working hard to shorten the distance so that Congress won't always be in the dust."

Nevertheless, many legislators continue to stand on the sidelines. Most of them remain unwired because they fear that the Net may create new burdens for public servants like themselves, who already feel maxed-out by the demands of office.

GOVERNMENT OF ROBOTS

"There is certainly the danger that we will become a government of robots who simply respond to the influx of e-mail," says Representative Ehlers, "but I think we're a long way from that."

At a recent CIC meeting David Winston, formerly a contributing editor for the (no longer extant) PoliticsNow Web site, tried to convince staff members of uncommitted lawmakers to go online by describing the power of the Internet in terms more easily understood by politicians: In the last election, stressed Winston, one in four voters used the Internet as a primary source of information in deciding who to vote for.

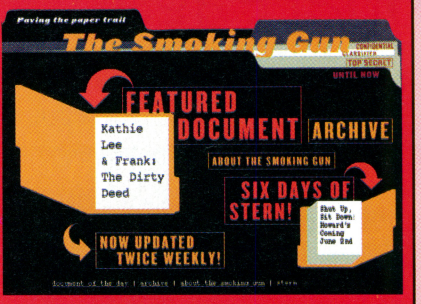
Winston's argument met with a cool response that evening, but he says it's only a matter of time before Internet skills are as ubiquitous on the Hill as phone skills. And then the CIC's mission will have been accomplished. "There is still a certain amount of the earlier Internet-glamour hype in the media, so members of Congress are trying to drape themselves in high-tech," he says. "But ultimately, the success of the CIC will be demonstrated when it is no longer needed."

Suzan Revah *is associate editor of* American Journalism Review. *Send e-mail comments and questions to postings@webmagazine.com.*

POLITICS/LAW Sites | BY SUZAN REVAH

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: THE SMOKING GUN



NEW Pierce straight to the heart of the matter by following the Smoking Gun's paper trail. By posting primary source documents obtained from the government, law enforcement, and court files nationwide, The Gun provides behind-the-scenes peeks at the highest levels of chicanery, mayhem, and just plain foolishness. With amusing teasers that offset the incomprehensible legalese of the documents displayed, this site handles the heavy lifting involved in investigative reporting so you can sit back and enjoy the payoff. The "grand opening" features 76 pages of unexpurgated FBI debriefings with beautician-turned-hit man, Sammy "The Bull" Gravano. The Smoking Gun's bold design, which employs a file folder aesthetic, riffs playfully on the confidentiality theme.

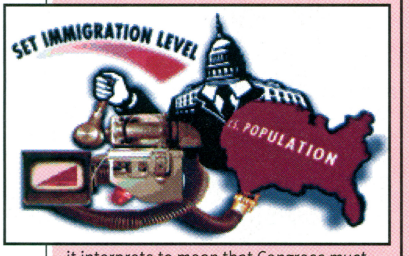
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

www.thesmokinggun.com

IMMIGRATION

NUMBERS USA
www.numbersUSA.com

NEW Numbers USA's approach to immigration policy is strictly by the numbers. Its anti-immigration advocacy focuses on population figures—numbers



it interprets to mean that Congress must stem the immigration tide to avoid creating an overcrowded America where conditions resemble those in the Third World. Interactive charts, friendly graphics, and a welcoming interface drive home Numbers USA's message: There isn't any room for huddled masses here!

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

U.S. BORDER CONTROL
www.usbc.org

NEW The word *immigration* has become so politically charged that distinctions between legal and illegal immigrants are sometimes forgotten. But not at U.S. Border Control, which advocates legal immigration and offers a wealth of information suggesting that there is common ground in the immigration debate. For example, polls show that all ethnic groups support ending illegal immigration. Check out "Border Alert" for data revealing what's good and what's bad about America's melting pot.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

PUBLIC POLICY

COMMON CAUSE
www.commoncause.org

Politicians had never heard "campaign finance" and "reform" in the same sentence before Common Cause came along. A nonpartisan lobbying group dedicated to promoting accountable government, Common Cause invites you to cast a critical eye on Congress. Follow "The Money Trail" to see how deep our government's money addiction runs, find out whether politicians who talk the reform talk actually walk the straight and narrow walk, or take a quiz to see how savvy you are about influence peddling.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

EMPOWER AMERICA
www.townhall.com/empower

Anyone who advocates bootstraps and opposes handouts will find a like-minded train of thought at this no-frills public policy site. Empower America, a group cofounded by neo-conservatives William J. Bennett and Jack Kemp, claims to promote "progressive-conservatism" (a phrase that begs more questions than it answers). Whatever you call it, EA has strong opinions on issues like affirmative action, enterprise zones, and immigration.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

MADE IN THE U.S.A. FOUNDATION
www.madeusa.org

MUSAF is your home base for patriotic purchasing. Covering a host of issues such as NAFTA, the homeless, and child labor, this site is dedicated to keeping America competitive in the global economy by promoting consumption of U.S. goods and services. Complete with lists of links to American manufacturers, this site will show you just how much difference a label can make. Free traders beware.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

RIGHT ON THE WEB
rightweb.com

Supplying everything you need to surf the right side of the Web, this compilation of links to conservative resources provides quick clicking to sites dealing with religion, right-to-lifers, and (of course) Rush Limbaugh. Don't miss the Right Flicks, which presents the "best movies ever produced without liberal bias." Top picks include *Dead Poets' Society*, *National Lampoon's European Vacation*, and *The Blues Brothers*. Huh?

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

LIBERALS & LIBERTARIANS
www.batnet.com/liberty/liberal

In the true spirit of emancipation, this site tries to break down the walls between proponents of Big and No Government. Presenting a list of the top ten political issues that liberals and libertarians agree on (Number one: "That Newt Gingrich sure can make an ass out of himself"), plus FAQs and quotes from freedom-lovers like Henry David Thoreau, L&L argues that mixing liberal concerns with practical libertarian policies makes for a potent political cocktail.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 3

TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS

OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING TRIAL
www.newsenterpriseonline.com/oklahoma.htm

NEW Bring the emotional saga of Oklahoma City right to your desktop. The OCBT page covers all the bases, starting with an exhaustive account of the trial itself, based on daily reports culled from the AP wire. Other features include a detailed timeline,



breakdowns of prosecution and defense arguments, and descriptions of key courtroom players. Check here for news of further proceedings, appellate and criminal, following McVeigh's conviction.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

WHO KILLED JONBENÉT RAMSEY?
members.aol.com/halle8/jonbenet.htm

NEW If Patricia Ramsey ever submits a valid handwriting sample, the investigation of the murder of her 6-year-old daughter could finally go to trial. Until



then, the drip drip drip of suspicious information surrounding the murder makes for sensational reading. Unsurprisingly, the numerous pictures of the little beauty-pageant starlet make great fodder for the site, which publishes all the facts you need to decide whether the Ramseys loved JonBenét to death. Creepily thorough, thoroughly creepy.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

TOBACCO LIABILITY
www.bus.orst.edu/FACULTY/NIELSON/industry/tobacco/tobacco.htm

NEW Against a garish, flowery background, follow the efforts of anti-tobacco activists who hope to make the tobacco industry pay for smoking-related illness. Monitoring the until-recently losing battle against Big Tobacco, and offering resources that document tobacco's legal

and historical hold over consumers, this site promises to get meatier as the legal precedents protecting tobacco thus far—assumption of risk and contributory negligence—go up in smoke.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

LEGAL BACKGROUND

LAW JOURNAL EXTRA!
www.ljx.com

NEW Ignorance of the law is no excuse, according to the old saw; but once you've explored this highly educational site from the National Law Journal, you won't have to plead ignorance, anyway. Read the latest legal news, keep up with current litigation, learn about ongoing ethical debates in law, and find any legal resource you're looking for by examining this cornucopia of legal information. It's like a poor man's law school.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

THE LEGAL PAD
www.legal-pad.com

NEW If you need legal resources but don't want to pay by the hour to find them, The Legal Pad points you in the right direction. This searchable index puts you one click away from lists of legal corporations, URLs of journals and publishers, and links to hundreds of law schools and firms. For aspiring lawyers, the weekly journal posted by the site's author, a first-year law student, may prove to be the site's most useful information.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

SELF HELP LAW CENTER
www.selfhelplaw.com

NEW Leaving aside the question of whether defending yourself is wise, SHLC offers a practical primer to self-representation. Take advantage of the Law Library to bone up on current statutes and precedents, or use the Online Calculator to gauge the fairness of your child-support payments. Recognizing that preparation is the key to winning any legal battle, the Self Help Law Center helps you to take the law into your own hands.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

WASHINGTOONS

DISCORDIA!
www.tcp.com/~prime8/Orbit/Confrontation

NEW Discordia envisions finding solutions to our political problems by thinking outside the box—way, way outside the box. Check out "Conspiracy-O-Rama" and a resource page for the zero-work movement. Travel down the political highway to places where the traditional line between conservative and liberal blurs, or forge new definitions of obscenity. Refreshing in its humorous approach to controversial current events and captivating in its derisive approach to weighty political issues, Discordia packs a punch—largely by keeping readers guessing about just how seriously to take it.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

THE FLAG-BURNING PAGE
www.indirect.com/user/warren/flag.html

Championing the First Amendment generally and the right to burn the American symbol of freedom specifically, this site is command central for opposition to any anti-flag-burning constitutional amendment. In addition to the cute "burn a virtual flag" game, Flag-Burning offers a comprehensive history of "flag desecration in popular culture," slyly demonstrating that Congress ought to have better things to do with its time.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5



THE TRICKLE-DOWNER
members.aol.com/ttw2000/eco.htm

NEW If you've ever wondered how the government reconciles economic policy and political rhetoric, The Trickle-Downer will tell you: It doesn't. Conferring "The Ecobuster" award on the person who "attacks the biosphere in the most ingenious and profitable manner" and sponsoring a contest for "Trickle-Downer of the Month"—the person who best uses power and influence to take advantage of the public—this site has fun skewering supply-side economists for their cooked books. Sure to give you a chuckle, if not a Laffer curve.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

A LINCOLN BEDROOM FOR THE REST OF US
www.mojones.com/news_wire/leora_lincoln.html

NEW If you don't have the padded wallet or political clout needed to enjoy White House hospitality these days, this site from *Mother Jones* helps you find a Lincoln bedroom of your very own—at a reasonable rate. Lincoln Bedroom compiles a list of various bed and breakfasts that boast rooms with historical Lincoln connections: The RidgeRunner Bed & Breakfast claims to have artifacts from the room where Lincoln slept, including a towel rack!

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

PRIVACY

PEACEFIRE: THE TEEN NET ANTI-CENSORSHIP ALLIANCE
www.peacefire.org

Teenage rebels with a cause. Peacefire is a revolutionary space where teens from all over the world gather to form a political community, share values, and fight for political rights. Its most prominent battle so far has been against the installment of "quick-fix" censorware in schools and libraries. Peacefire advocates parental guidance in place of censorship. This dense site is loaded with tasty links and offers a blow-by-blow chronicle of its skirmish with CYBERsitter, a leading site-blocking software company.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

THE PRIVACY PAGES
www.2020tech.com/maildrop/privacy.html

NEW Concerned about online privacy but can't comprehend the latest privacy jargon or wade through the flood of security products on the market? The Privacy Pages site simplifies the issues, linking to dozens of helpful (read: understandable) resources. Learn about hackers, encryption, and how the government is trying to make the Internet safe for business; then draw an informed conclusion about how secure you should feel in cyberspace.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

A TO Z CRYPTOLOGY
www.achiever.com/freehmpg/cryptology/crypto.html

NEW Forget the doom-and-gloom predictions about the future of online privacy. A to Z Cryptology puts the fun back into the quest for security: Try your hand at Pig Latin, the matrix method, transposition ciphers, and the zodiac alphabet for starters; then take a cryptology exam, or find simple answers to your cryptology FAQs. Even if you have nothing to hide, A to Z makes the code game as alluring as a secret assignation with Mata Hari.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

YOUTH POLITICS

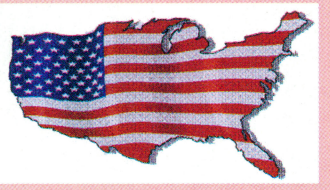
THIRD MILLENNIUM
www.thirdmil.org

Redirecting the nation's attention from the next election cycle to the next generational cycle, Third Millennium raises awareness about long-term problems like the deficit. The group's well-designed outpost offers interactive reality checks about the (nonexistent) future of Social Security and the amount each young American owes toward paying off the interest on our national debt. Don't miss the Third Millennium 30, which features passionate op-ed pieces written by top students from the nation's high schools.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

YOUNG AMERICA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE
libertynet.org/~yamerica

NEW Getting a jump on the future of politics, this bipartisan PAC seeks to empower youth by linking them with the



important leaders, organizations, and institutions. By promoting its guiding principles—participation, organization, and dialog—Young America hopes to transfer youthful energy into real political power. A recent "Grip and Grin" featured Robert Casey, Jr., Pennsylvania Auditor General. Upcoming guests include Harris Wofford and Lynn Abraham.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL YOUTH
www.worldlib.org/iflry

NEW Departing from the simplistic yearnings of the "give peace a chance" school of activism, the IFLRY takes seriously—too seriously—its mission of promoting liberty, democracy, and civil rights. Complete with a manifesto and an excruciatingly specific program of action, this site outlines an idealized vision of a world in which everyone is as enlightened, mobilized, and committed as federation members are. Seems like tuning in, turning on, and dropping out would be a lot more fun.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

POLITICAL NEWS

CAPITOL HILL BLUE
www.capitolhillblue.com

Not the adult version of *Anonymous*, but a political Webzine from a former newspaperman and self-described "political agnostic." CHB is chock-full of unbridled cynicism and smartass spin, delivering a daily briefing on the buzz inside the Beltway, plus truth-is-stranger-than-fiction soundbites, no-holds-barred opinions on why you should bother voting, daily historical highlights, and more. Taken together, it forms a perfect mix of political information, agitation, and condemnation.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

WIRED NEWS (POLITICS)
www.wired.com/news/politics

NEW For political news refracted through a cyberspace lens, the politics section of Wired News is a must-read. While other news sites aim to be first, Wired News strives to provide analysis and context, adding a dose of *Wired*-style irreverence to boot. Updated several times daily, Wired News takes advantage of the Web's immediacy to deliver news you can use. The predictable libertarian slant does get a bit tiresome, but it's like the formica that comes with the kitchen.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

EVOTE
www.evote.com

If you think politics is the ultimate game, be sure to bookmark eVote. With 24-hour inside-the-Beltway coverage of breaking political news, fearless features (such as one that slammed Congressman Edward Markey (D-MA) for berating an expert witness in a Congressional hearing), timely polls (one recently asked whether the Supreme Court should find the line-item veto constitutional), and a gallery of uproarious political cartoons.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

NETLY NEWS NETWORK
www.netlynews.com

NEW Sometimes fluffy but generally a good mix of the latest in digital and political news, the Netly News Network combines the bells and whistles of the Web with the quick-hit newsworthiness of television newscasts. With timely updates on the buzz in cyberspace and government efforts to get wired, this site hints at an age in which the Internet is a primary source of news. Real news junkies, however, should not jump ship from CNN to NNN just yet.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

NET POLITICAL NEWSTALK NETWORK
net.fcref.org

NEW Promising political news that "isn't for couch potatoes," the online service of NET TV dishes right-wing commentary in place of "the tired, failed liberalism that fills and warps most American media." Looking at events through the eyes of the "common person," NET TV's site offers public-affairs chat rooms based on the programming of its television network. A recent poll asked whether conservatives should target the National Endowment for the Arts or the Department of Education as their top defunding priority.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

FREEDOM WRITER
www.berkshire.net/~ifas/fw

Taking "a hard look at the hard right," Freedom Writer provides saturation coverage of conservative excesses. Published by the Institute for First Amendment Studies, "a non-profit organization devoted to protecting First Amendment freedoms with a particular emphasis on the separation of church and state," FW recounts the discovery of anti-abortion propaganda in boxes of Cap'n Crunch cereal (we're not kidding) and discusses how some women believe cervical cancer is a punishment from God.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

BY JANE BOSVELD

Data of the Damned

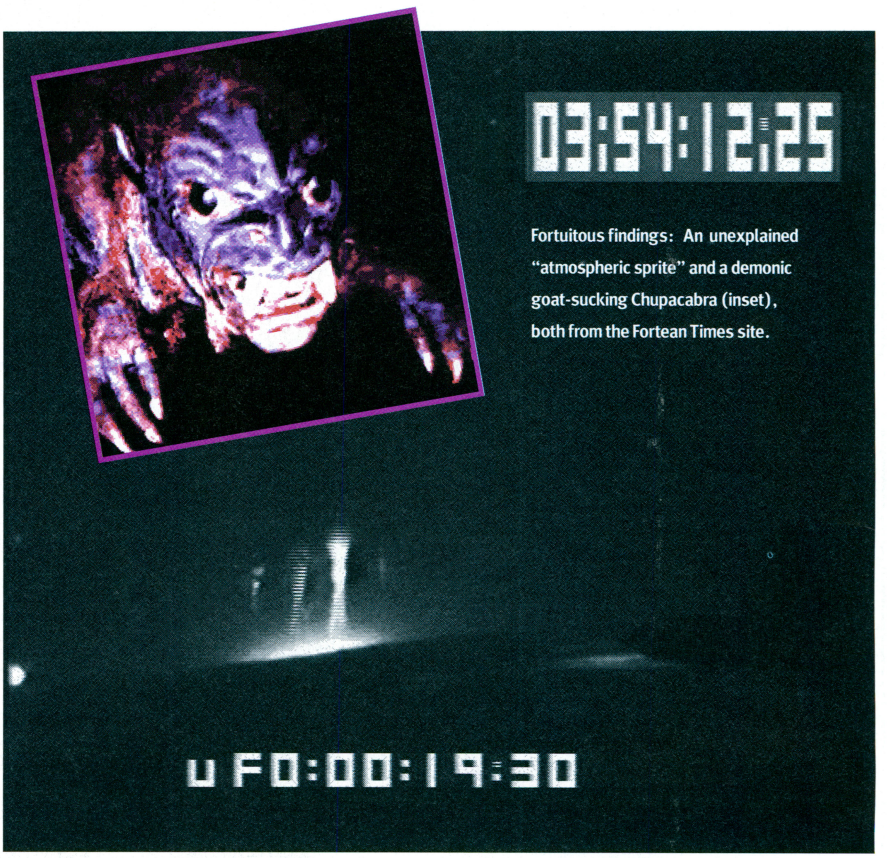
A collector of scientific anomalies enjoys an after-death revival

EVERY DAY FOR 27 YEARS, Charles Fort, a rotund man with fleshy jowls and a thick mustache, sat at a library table and perused scientific journals, newspapers, and magazines, searching for reports of strange and unexplained phenomena. Whenever he found something interesting, Fort scribbled it on a slip of paper and later filed it in a shoe box, his cabinet of choice. Among the thousands of oddities he collected:

- announced telescopic sightings of angelic creatures and flying discs in the night sky
- reports of snowflakes the size of saucers falling on Nashville in January 1892
- published stories about tons of red mud splattering onto parts of Australia in June 1903
- hundreds of accounts of fish, tadpoles, toads, snails, and lizards—as well as substances resembling beef, silk, and butter—raining from the sky in various localities

Fort refused to accept the prevailing scientific opinion regarding such anomalies: that large storms had blown up mud, fish, and other objects in a swirl and dropped them thousands of miles away, or that the angels and UFOs were misidentified astronomical events. Fort insisted that the physical universe could only be understood if the myriad unexplained events were examined seriously by open-minded investigators, rather than trivialized as unimportant or unverifiable. He referred to the body of scientifically excluded information as "the data of the damned."

If Fort were alive today (he died in 1932), he would probably be delighted by the exposure the Web gives to mysterious events. Indeed, the Web, along with Usenet, is one of the world's great repositories of reports on scientific anomalies. The Fortean Times page, for instance, serves as the Web presence for the British magazine that is Fort's namesake. Here you can find links to major articles and Web sites devoted to such phenomena as UFOs, crop circles, and cryptozoology (unclassified animal life, including Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster, and an African dinosaur-like creature called the Mokele-Mbembe).



Fortuitous findings: An unexplained "atmospheric sprite" and a demonic goat-sucking Chupacabra (inset), both from the Fortean Times site.

A DODO BORN EVERY MINUTE?

The Fortean Times page also publishes news stories you probably won't read about in the *New York Times*, such as "How Dead Is the Dodo?" According to the story, a bird resembling the extinct Dodo has been spotted in a rain forest on the Dodo's native island of Mauritius. "The possibility that dodos have survived undetected by science into the present," the piece comments, "is exceedingly slim, to say the least. Nevertheless, it needs to be checked out." A leading cryptozoologist was reportedly planning an expedition to Mauritius to look for the Dodo in July of this year.

Ironically, the strangest of all the unexplained mysteries pages are the ones with the heftiest scientific credentials. For example, the Society for Scientific Exploration explains on its Web site that it was established in 1987 as a forum "for the presentation, scrutiny and criticism of scientific research on topics outside the established disciplines of mainstream science." Or as plasma physicist (and president of SSE) Peter A. Sturrock puts it, "Some phenomena, if they prove to be real, will challenge our established scientific beliefs... the fact that some topics now seem curious, even bizarre, does not mean that they should be ignored."

What sorts of phenomena is Dr. Sturrock referring to? The Web site contains accounts of the CIA's remote viewing program at Stanford Research Institute, an analysis of the Colorado UFO project, explanations for the "mysterious sounds" produced by very large meteor fireballs, descriptions of phobias found in children who claim to remember past lives, and a scientific inquiry into the validity of astrology. Charles Fort must be taking notes in his grave.

The most impressive link off the SSE page is to the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research program (PEAR)—a serious scientific center that examines the nature of human consciousness and the effect it may have on such things as the performance of mechanical, electronic, optical,

and acoustic machines. Among other aspects of its research, PEAR has documented that the thoughts of human operators can and do influence the functions of some machines. Moreover, these effects, the researchers write, are "statistically repeatable."

In another set of experiments, PEAR demonstrated that humans can "acquire information" about distant places they know nothing about, when another human concentrates and records his or her impressions of that place and tries to relay it to them. Unfortunately, the Web page does not detail those studies, so any scientific context is lost. The site does, however, supply all necessary information for ordering the book *Margins of Reality*, which details PEAR's work.

Just because serious scientists are investigating bizarre matters doesn't mean these phenomena will ultimately be validated. If studies of an anomaly show it to be false, the subject eventually winds up in the great trash heap of inaccurate (or at least unverifiable) information. But as the Princeton anomalies program demonstrates, some of Fort's data of the damned cannot be dismissed out of hand. Indeed, the research into the matter has only just begun. ■

THE SITES

FORTEAN TIMES
www.forteantimes.com
SOCIETY FOR SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION
www.jse.com
PRINCETON ENGINEERING ANOMALIES RESEARCH
www.princeton.edu/~rdnelson/pear.html
THE ANOMALIST
www.cloud9.net/~patrick/anomalist
THE QUOTABLE FORT
www.cloud9.net/~patrick/anomalist/Fort1.htm
OMNI ANTIMATTER
www.omnimag.com/antimatter
SCIENCE FRONTIERS
www.knowledge.co.uk/frontiers

Jane Bosveld *is the author of* While a Tree Was Growing *(Workman & The American Museum of Natural History, 1997). Address e-mail comments and questions to postings@webmagazine.com.*

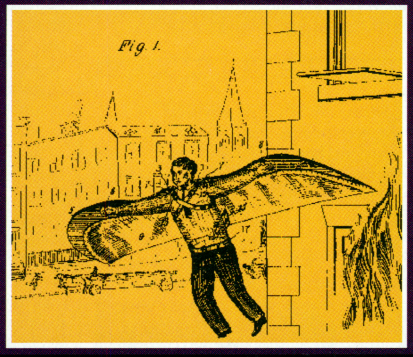
SCIENCE Sites | BY DEAN ANDREWS

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: WACKY PATENT OF THE MONTH

NEW Attorney Michael J. Colitz, Jr., collects patents of strange inventions and posts them here. The inventors seem drawn to multitasking efficiency—as if too much free time weren't to blame for these ingenious devices in the first place. With the Portable Self-Propelled Band Saw, for example, you can work out and build furniture simultaneously. Add an alluring bouquet to your smoking experience with the Combination Cigarette Lighter and Perfume Dispenser. And speed up delivery of your newborn with the Apparatus for Facilitating the Birth of a Child by Centrifugal Force. Talk about labor-saving devices! Colitz also provides an overview of the patent process, in case you decide your own invention isn't as crazy as Pasquale Nigro's fire escape wings (right).

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4



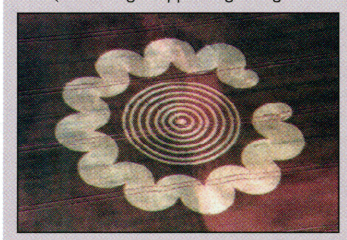
colitz.com/site/wacky.htm

ALL THE ANSWERS

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
stis.nsf.gov/start.htm
NEW This government agency spends more than $3.3 billion per year fostering progress in the sciences, from physical to behavioral. Check here to learn what the NSF has done for you recently. The site includes news highlights, descriptions of funded programs, and information on how to participate in educational projects. Search the databases for specific topic areas, or investigate the links to scores of big-time science sites.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

EINSTEIN REVEALED
www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/nova/einstein
NEW Physicists are a bright bunch, but the greatest geniuses of all were Albert Einstein and Isaac Newton. This Web page from Nova Online illustrates Einstein's brilliant revisions of Newtonian physics through essays, a timeline, and interactive games. Don't miss the description of his 1905 annus mirabilis (miracle year), when he conceived several fundamental theories that physicists still ponder. Jump to other Einstein sites or to *Nova*'s homepage from here.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

THE CIRCLEMAKERS
www.geocities.com/SoHo/3671
NEW Doodles of the Gods? At last, the truth behind the mysterious crop circles (which began appearing in English



fields 20 years ago) can be told. The hosts of this site recap the history of circlemaking, explain the initial inspiration (a post-pub lark), and supply a how-to guide for beginners. (Warning: Farmers in the USA often have shotguns.) "It's only flattened corn," remarks a perpetrator, but the hoaxers' antics have confounded many a scientist. Circlemaker software for creating crop art online is promised soon.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

THE WHY FILES
whyfiles.news.wisc.edu
NEW Learn "the science behind the news" at this National Science Foundation–funded site. Twice monthly, TWF publishes feature stories that explore the math, engineering, and/or technology involved in current events like stock market fluctuations and archeological digs. Past stories are archived for easy reference. Check the Cool Image files for striking photos of noteworthy microbes, celestial objects, and more. Or contribute to forums categorized by science subject.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

THE ASTRONOMY CAFÉ
www2.ari.net/home/odenwald/cafe.html
NEW As proprietor of "the Web site for the astronomically disadvantaged," Dr. Sten Odenwald aims to make the cosmos accessible to the layperson. Read his answers to 3,001 "Ask the Astronomer" questions, submit your own questions to him at his day job at the NASA Image/Poetry site, or browse a collection of his astronomy essays. In a memoirs section, he describes his love affair with science—which began with an episode of *The Outer Limits* he saw when he was nine.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

WATERWORLD

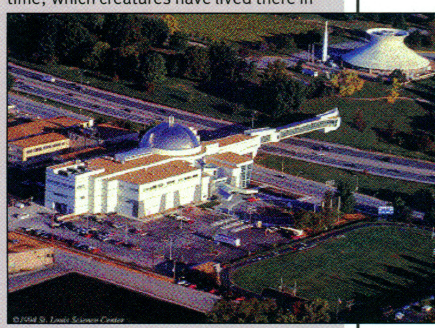
EL NIÑO THEME PAGE
www.pmel.noaa.gov/toga-tao/el-nino/home.html
NEW Play amateur meteorologist at this heavy-weather site. El Niño is a large-scale disruption of ocean-atmospheric conditions in the Pacific Ocean that occurs sporadically (usually once every two to seven years). The resulting oceanic warming alters fish populations locally and can affect weather around the world. Fortunately, scientists can track El Niño through intelligent buoys, satellites, and other nifty instruments that you can access in this demonstration. Link to other weather agencies and research projects from here.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

OCEAN PLANET
seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/ocean_planet.html
Find out how 60,000 Nike shoes, swept from a cargo ship during a storm in 1990, are confirming the contours of the North Pacific gyre. Ocean Planet, a Smithsonian touring exhibit of marine life and ecology, tends to focus on large-scale oceanic phenomena—currents, climate, biodiversity, pollution, El Niño—but some cool critters are displayed as well. The design lets you click the floor plan to navigate, or search the site by subject.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

SEAWEB
www.seaweb.org
For grim, informed multimedia news on the latest ocean hazards, visit SeaWeb, the Chicken Little of the Sea. QuickTime movies, RealAudio broadcasts, and monthly newsletter articles—all reflecting SeaWeb's "objective but not neutral" slant—spur you to defend the earth's marine environments, often by putting the worst face on undeniably bad news ("Mad Fish" disease, anyone?). The organization will e-mail you future issues of its newsletter if you wish. Follow the links to like-minded entities.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

MUSEUMS

ST. LOUIS SCIENCE CENTER
www.slsc.org
NEW This somewhat Missouri-centric museum covers lots of scientific ground, accessibly and without condescension. You'll find exhibits on how the region has changed through geological time, which creatures have lived there in



the past, and what its current earthquake and tornado risks are (pretty darn high on both counts). Other displays take you quite a bit farther afield—to Africa and to outer space, for example. The Science Adventures section conveniently breaks out kid-oriented exhibits by approximate grade level, from K to 8.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM
www.wpafb.af.mil/museum
Your tax dollars at work. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, hosts this information-packed aviation museum. Eight galleries display samples of aircraft from flight's earliest days to the latest gazillion-dollar military hardware. Special exhibits cover aviation history, engine design, and ground support equipment. A Discovery Hangar explains the science of flight to children. Don't miss the cool weapons section, with pix of nerve gas bombs, airborne thermonuclear bombs, and other relics of the good old "balance of terror" era.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

SCIENCE MUSEUM OF MINNESOTA
www.sci.mus.mn.us
NEW Early grade-schoolers will enjoy the interactive exhibits here. Follow the

point-and-click fun to learn about monarch butterflies, worms, wind energy, Mayan artifacts, and more. Jump to the Science Learning Networks for more information on teaching programs, online exhibits, and museums around the country.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

NATURE DIORAMAS
www.chias.org/www/diorama/intro.html
Kids love nature dioramas, which show groups of animals interacting in a room-size portion of a particular habitat. The Chicago Academy of Science's venerable dioramas of Chicago-area habitats have recently been "retired" onto the Web. Click back a hundred years to meadows, prairies, sand dunes, and fens populated by various species native to the region—including such long-gone aboriginals as bears and wolves. Return to the Academy's homepage for information on other CAS exhibits and a calendar of events. Suggestion to the online curators: How about identifying *all* the birds and animals shown?
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

THE FREUD MUSEUM
www.dalton.org/students/DBS/freud
NEW The real-world museum occupies Sigmund Freud's London home and contains his library, his collection of antiquities, and furniture he brought with him from Vienna when fleeing the Nazis in 1938. The only interesting feature of the museum's online counterpart, however, is a photo of Freud's famous psychoanalytic couch, which sports a fever-dream psychedelic covering but looks surprisingly comfy. Go ahead and have a "cigar," doc; I'll just wait for you here.
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 1 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

DINOSAURS

PAPER DINOSAURS 1824–1969
www.lhl.lib.mo.us/pubserv/hos/dino/welcome.htm
A delightful set of 19th- and early 20th-century graphical depictions of dinosaurs (mostly ink drawings)—plus a handful of post-WWII views—with sharp accompanying text. See firsthand the hazards of free-wheeling scientific conjecture (heads stuck on tailbones instead of neck bones; a nearby skull—of a different dinosaur species, alas—placed on an almost complete but headless skeleton; etc.). The online show is admirably designed, with lots of supplementary material and full-screen views of each picture.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

DINOSAURIA ON-LINE
www.dinosauria.com
You need never be stumped for a gift idea again. Pick up full-scale T. rex tooth or smilodon skull replicas at this site's Dinostore. All the merchandise on display costs less than $300 (plus shipping)! And when you're finished shopping, browse the Omnipedia for anatomical terms, geological time references, and maps of the ancient earth. Finally, scout the photo gallery for images of fantastic fossil finds.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

FUNKY DINOSAUR LAND
www.comet.net/dinosaur
A modest but judicious selection of categorized and annotated links to the terrible lizards. FDL sorts dino sites—60+ in all—under six headings: art, museums, reference, tours, articles, and other. As a first stop on your dino quest, it sure beats a search engine. Check the "Other" category to find out how you can participate in a dinosaur dig.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

DINOFEST '98
www.dinofest.org
Billed as the first World's Fair of Dinosaurs, this event is scheduled to take place in April '98 at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. ANSP plans to present a seminar with expert paleontologists, an art show, and a dinofeast where you'll get to chow down on food dinosaurs might have eaten. (Heart of palm? Leg of triceratops? Foot-long cockroach al fresco? Primordial soup?) Check here for details on attending this evolutionarily correct party.
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

REPRODUCING MAMMALS

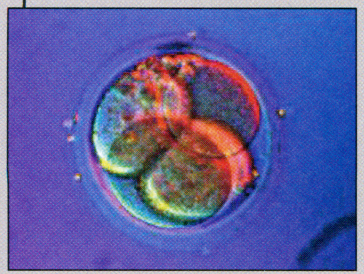
CLONING: A SPECIAL REPORT
www.newscientist.com/nsplus/insight/clone/clone.html
NEW *New Scientist* magazine offers this clear-headed overview of the controversial "Hello Dolly" sheep cloning experiment in Scotland. Find out how the experiment succeeded (after 276 tries) and what it might mean for our future.



Op-ed pieces, a bioethics forum, and a cloning ethics FAQ page discuss the specter of multiple Elvises and related issues of beastly (and human) eugenics. Fill out the To Clone or Not to Clone survey, or jump to other sites on the topic.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

PANDA DIARY
www.sandiegozoo.org/Zoo/panda_diary.html
NEW Follow the ups and downs of the San Diego Zoo's attempts to mate two Chinese pandas, through the keeper's diary updates: "[Bai Yun] approaches Shi Shi when he is either feeding or resting. His typical response remains a bark or growl, sometimes followed by a paw swat, and then Bai Yun leaves." Uh-oh, sounds like an episode of Codependent Pandas Anonymous. The Panda Fact Sheet provides details of behavior, diet, and reproduction (female pandas are fertile for only 24 to 48 hours a year!). Click back to the San Diego Zoo's main site for info on less diffident creatures.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE VISIBLE EMBRYO
visembryo.ucsf.edu
NEW You won't find birds or bees here, just a close-up examination of the first four weeks of human embryonic development. Each of the site's four sections—fertilization, implantation, gastrulation, and folding—comes with detailed illustrations of the microscopic goings-on plus text descriptions. Before you leave, take the online multiple-choice quiz (supplied by the University of California, San Francisco) to test what you've learned.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4



FIRE AND ICE

MOUNT ST. HELENS
volcano.und.nodak.edu/vwdocs/msh/msh.html
Forget Hollywood's latest scientifically bogus disaster film. In May 1980, Mount St. Helens in Washington state blew its lid and spewed igneous debris over 150 square miles of Washington and Oregon. This section of the VolcanoWorld site gives the earth-shattering details, with images, text, and movies (supplied by the USGS) covering events before, during, and after the main eruption. Read about plant and animal recolonizers of the mudflow region, take a QuickTime VR tour of the summit, or leap down into VolcanoWorld's Online Education Program.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

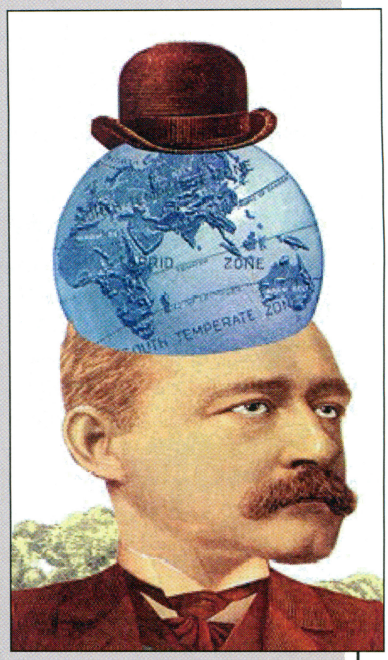
LIVE FROM ANTARCTICA 2
quest.arc.nasa.gov:80/antarctica2
Can't take the school bus down to Antarctica next winter? This electronic field trip, designed for young students, is the next best thing. Review field reports—complete with photos and journal entries—from the Long-Term Ecological Research project team based at Palmer Station, Antarctica; or click the maps of the polar region under investigation. Teachers will find complete lesson and activity plans and can contact the Passport to Knowledge organization that set up this chilly tour. The concentration game and annotated links are bonuses.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

MEDICAL JOURNALS

MEDICAL TRIBUNE
www.medtrib.com
NEW Browse this online version of the physician's newspaper from the New York Times Syndicate, published 21 times a year. Feature stories discuss the latest research on heart disease, cancer, AIDS, pregnancy, menopause, the elderly, and much more. Take the medical quiz to test your skill at diagnosing strange rashes. Or tune into the radio archives and hear doctors from around the country comment on their work. Excellent links!
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

THE BREAST CANCER COMPENDIUM
www.microweb.com/clg
NEW This intelligently edited, highly informative source for breast cancer news, research, and treatment updates is set to enhance its offerings even more. Soon the site will have expanded news coverage, more feature stories, and comprehensive treatment information. Annotated links route you to other breast cancer resources.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

ARTHRITIS TODAY
www.arthritis.org/at
NEW Arthritis sufferers can obtain a sampling of *AT*'s print content—past and present—by visiting this site. A representative issue online reproduces two of the six features published in the print mag for that month. To get all the stories, of course, you'll have to subscribe (which you can do from the site). Articles cover



arthritis research, workplace discrimination, and tips for managing the illness. Link to the Arthritis Foundation from here.
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

ACCESS TO TOOLS

ARCHIMEDES PROJECT
www-csli.stanford.edu:80/arch/front97.html
NEW Explore Stanford University's pioneering work with the Total Access System, which adapts computer technology to serve the needs of people with disabilities. You'll find overviews of ongoing research projects like the Communicator—a family of *Star Trek*–style hand-held devices designed to facilitate communication between people who don't speak a common language or who don't use the same mode of communication. Read bios of the scientists involved, and link to other accessibility technology sites.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3



HOLDEN'S HANDS-ON SCIENCE
www.infi.net/~holdenj/test3.html
NEW Janet (the scientist) and George (the HTML guy) Holden present a half-dozen science experiments that young students can perform with a few household items. You can also send away for the $7 Complete Lab Book, which presents 47 such experiments. But don't expect advice on how to reach related sites: The Holdens found inappropriate pictures at some of these and subsequently removed all links.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

BY LILY BURANA

A Trip Down Mammary Lane

Huge or itty-bitty, fake or for real, the breast finds a home online

WHITHER THE TIT MAN? Have we heard the last of that connoisseur of the sublime womanly protuberance? And what of his female counterpart, the less common but no less delightful tit woman? These days, it seems passé to profess a fondness for breasts, as in "How Hugh Hefner can you get?" But what doesn't get expressed in conversation gets screamed all over the Web: Wutcha want, brudda? Little tits? Big ones? REALLY big ones? Right this way, just follow the bouncing cursor.

In America, the reigning sentiment continues to be "bigger is better." For fans of more than a handful, the homespun touch of Danni's Hard Drive, hosted by the utterly bodacious Danni Ashe, promises endless titillation. You'll find lots of profiles of women with names like Kayla Kleavage, Pandora Peaks, and Tracy Topps, as well as Danni herself, plus links to other big-boob Web sites like Voluptuous and Score.

Small breasts, or "poached eggs" as my friend Marc calls them, have online devotees, too. I understand the appeal: Pert, small breasts look youthful, elegant, natural, and sporty. And they're a heavenly sight in a tight T-shirt. I stoke my delicate ta-ta envy by poring over the selections brought up on The Ultimate Small Breast Homepage. (For what it's worth, Brazil's "bigger is better" sentiment functions inversely to ours: The cultural preference there is for a big butt and small breasts. Too bad we can't arrange some intercontinental surgical swaps—porting all that delectable fat from American thighs into Brazilian rumps while we warehouse all their excised boobflesh.)

BREASTS AS CULTURAL ICONS

I don't know what to say about the subtrend of worshipping models with comically humongous breasts: It seems like some Frankensteinian patchwork of the tendencies of Russ Meyer, P. T. Barnum, and Bob Guccione. I'm loath to rain on anyone's fantasy parade, but when I see a site like Svengali Graphics, I gotta wonder, what the heck is up with that? It's an entirely new "development" in erotica. First implants, then super-big implants, then this—a funhouse distortion reflected in the glass of fashion.

Back in the days when men wore wiglets and women wore skirts full enough to conceal an entire coterie of midgets, veined, milk-white breasts were considered the height of sexiness. Women would spend hours powdering their bosoms and painting blue lines on their breasts until they looked like rounded scoops of Stilton cheese.

The standards of beauty in Boobville have changed, but the presentation of breasts requires no less time and attention. Consider the agony of choosing the right bra. Push-up? Reducer? Front-closure? Back-closure? Strapless? Lace or satin? Seamed or smooth cup? I ordered a catalog from the Frederick's of Hollywood Web site and almost shrieked when I saw all the choices and their funny monikers (like "Captivator" and "Smooth Operator").



Jane Russell: Proof that bigger is better?

SHOOTING STAR ARCHIVES

For men, looking at lingerie catalogs may be a turn-on; but for every woman I know, it's an anxiety attack waiting to happen. Trying to find the best combination of functionality, foxiness, and comfort is a unique form of feminine hell. That's why it's essential to compliment women on their bras: These items don't come easy.

FALSIES AT ALL COSTS

The current standards of mammary magnitude certainly haven't made life any easier for those who never had breasts to begin with. In the past, transvestites and transsexuals resorted to stuffing a bra, taping their own breasts into a meager cleavage, or tracking down a set of cheesy falsies. But not anymore! Thanks to the enterprising folks at Transvestite Transformations, any man with TV in his soul can place a Web order for an array of silicone prosthetic breasts. They come in multitudinous shapes, sizes, quality levels, and prices, and each is given an amusing (albeit appropriate) model name—such as "Teenage," "Massive," or "Perfect."

For women (and men) who wish to introduce a permanent addition to their chests, there is, of course, the option of surgical breast augmentation. This now-common procedure can be per-

formed a number of ways. For instance, you can choose to have the implants inserted through incisions in the armpit, the nipple, the underside of the breasts, or the navel. Nonetheless, the decision to get implants should not be treated lightly. Candidates for the surgery need to know that augmentation will make breasts look larger, but not necessarily natural. To see for herself, a gal can check out the thousands of before and after photos of boob jobs (reductions and enlargements) at The Body Electric site, a place that also posts info on the procedure itself, and its pros and cons.

One pro: "The biggest advantage of breast enlargement is the additional power that the patient gains." The phrasing conjures up visions of surgically enhanced Amazons leveling nations with a mere flash of their almighty teats. One of the cons, of course, is that people may never again look you in the eye when they talk to you; and oh yeah, you might want to consider all those health risks. But shucks, those are small potatoes in return for all that "power."

Where have all the tit men gone? They're on their knees at the digital frontier, gleefully succumbing to the power of the nippled mound in all its shapes and sizes. Say bye-bye to the boob-tube and hello to the breast alternative we could find. ■

THE SITES

DANNI'S HARD DRIVE
www.danni.com
THE ULTIMATE SMALL BREAST HOMEPAGE
www.zensoft.com/pages/small+breasts.htm
SVENGALI GRAPHICS
www.tiac.net/users/svengali/p0000059.htm
FREDERICK'S OF HOLLYWOOD
www.fredericks.com
TRANSVESTITE TRANSFORMATIONS
www.transformation.co.uk/products/breasts
THE BODY ELECTRIC
www.surgery.com/body

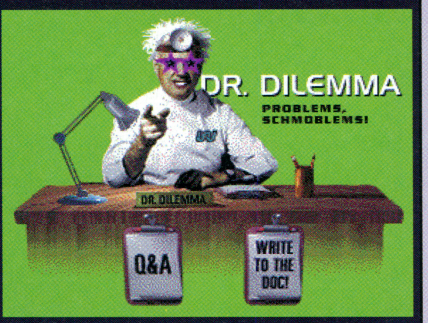
Lily Burana exists virtually at www.well.com/user/lilyb. Send e-mail comments and questions to postings@webmagazine.com.

SEXUALITY Sites | BY LAURA VICTORIA

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: DUREX WORLD

NEW Next time you wrap that rascal, remember that condom culture dates back to the year 1350 B.C. Catch up on the complete history of the love glove here at Durex's new site. You can also get answers to embarrassing sex questions, a downloadable screensaver, the behind-the-scenes scoop on rubber production, and a list of the Top 10 Lamest Reasons Not to Use A Condom. You can also e-mail their resident sex expert with questions and peruse oodles of (buried but fascinating) links organized by subject with articles listed alphabetically and chronologically. The only drawback: The gorgeous modern design, with hip typefaces, cool attitude, and magazine-like format, is slow to load. Still, it's impressive for a company whose business is selling latex sheaths.



CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

www.durex.com

EDUCATIONAL/RESOURCES

SEX! DRUGS!
tlc.discovery.com/area/history/courtship/courtship3.html#forums



NEW "You've come a long way, baby" could be the tag line here. Discovery Online traces the evolution of sexual attitudes, knowledge, language, customs, and practices through the years. Peruse quotes (e.g., from Gloria Steinem), discover old and new relationship buzz words ("Courtly love," vs. "commitment-phobe"), marvel at how Hallmark's romance cards have changed since the early 1900s, or click on the RealAudio clips. A comprehensive and entertaining survey.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 3 OVERALL 5

ELF M. STERNBERG'S HOME PAGE
www.halcyon.com/elf

NEW "The alt.sex FAQ is the oldest and most comprehensive guide to sexuality found on the Internet," says its overseer Elf M. Sternberg. And lucky for us, Elf archives it here. He's also collected the "canonical hanky code" (so you'll know that wearing a magenta scarf in your right back pocket tells the world you worship armpits), along with info on the Seattle S/M scene, a Net porn bill of rights, and what Sternberg claims is the Net's largest science-fiction erotica series.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

INTERNET ADULT FILM DATA BASE
homepage.eznet.net/~rwilhelm/asm/dbsearch.html

Looking for an erotic film featuring Christy Canyon, but too embarrassed to ask the video clerk? Here, in the privacy of your home (or workplace), you can just type in the desired actor, director, or film title and a list will appear. You can read film reviews and discussions of porn, glean various fun facts (like how to discover a porn star's real name), hear gossip, and appreciate the attempts at humor.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

INTERNET SEX RADIO
www.radiosex.com

Sure, you can find sex on the Web 24 hours a day, seven days a week. But that requires browsing millions of sites. Now I.S.R. broadcasts sex talk to you. New topics every month range from female ejaculation to Net video sex. Controls let you choose the subjects you want to hear about. Hosts Steve and Kym Martin downplay the sensationalism in answering questions submitted via e-mail or floppy disk, and confidentiality is assured. RealAudio or Voxware required.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE CHURCH OF TANTRA
www.tantra.org

Does slow, nonorgasmic sexual union or masturbation sound like torture or "spiritual ecstasy"? By practicing the various breathing, masturbation, and concentration exercises described here, you can be the proud possessor of mind-blowing prolonged orgasms. Find out how you can join the Church of Tantra, attend events, and obtain a discount on the aphrodisiacs, books, and videos offered for sale. With some erotic illustrations to excite your Lingam or Yoni.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

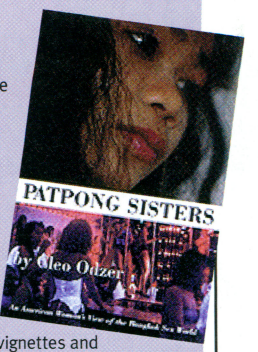
URBAN LEGENDS REFERENCE PAGE:
www.best.com/~bmikkels/sex/sex.shtml

Man staples scrotum back together after slicing it open on shop machine's drive-belt. Richard Gere has a gerbil removed from his butt. Couple accidentally returns erotic tape of themselves to video rental store. Notorious sex legends involving revenge, celebrities, bizarre pregnancies, and other topics are finally put to rest at this site. The history and factual basis (if any) of these legends are traced, with humorous accompanying illustrations and "variations" on the topics. Bottom-line veracity—true, false, or maybe—is indicated with handy icons.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

PATPONG SISTERS
desires.com/1.1/Features/patpong.html

NEW "The see-through lace barely reached her crotch, leaving her legs bare as they pressed against mine... I felt overwhelmed by naked female flesh." It's a come on, but probably not the kind you think: Knowing that sex sells, Cleo Odzer promotes her book about Bangkok's sex district (and the exploitation of Thai women there) by dribbling little erotic vignettes and photos throughout her site. Does the end justify the means? Well, that depends on whether reading descriptions of Thai woman opening soda bottles and writing with their vaginas horrifies or merely entertains you.



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

NICHE INTERESTS

ANIME AMERICA
www.animeam.com

The gals you'll see on this site differ from the gals on display at other adult sites. Sure, they're young, sexy, and alluring; but these vixens happen to be cartoons. At AA, you'll find hot anime (Japanese for animation) pictorials, comic strips, live chat, naughty humor, and even a Japanese dictionary. Samples are free but censored. A $5 membership will more than fulfill any crush you ever had on Veronica, Betty, or Jessica Rabbit.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

DIMENSIONS ONLINE
www.pencomputing.com/dim

Do you think the prediet Oprah was more of a babe? This site's dedicated to admirers of the "bigger is better" aesthetic. Enjoy sexy fiction where the fat chick scores the hot hunk; help pick a future cover model from the babes provocatively displaying their girth; buy a pic for $1.43; ponder which actresses are the likeliest future "plumpers"; and groove on Diane—all 560 pounds of her. Helpful hints, health columns, personals, and fashion showcases round out the site.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

BOSTON DUNGEON SOCIETY
www.bdsbbs.com/define.html

NEW The lingo of kinks today! If you can't tell your SAM from your CBT, if you have trouble remembering the difference between a slow word and a go word, if the whole notion of "topping from the bottom" has you baffled, this all-text lexicon of S&M terminology can fill in where Dr. Johnson comes up short. Try out your new vocabulary in a chat room (10-day free trial membership given), read erotic fiction and interviews with Dominants, and even peruse your S&M horoscope.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

SMOKING EXOTICA
www.worldclass.inter.net/exotica/enter.html

NEW When I was a teen, my mom told me that guys don't like to kiss girls who taste like dirty ashtrays. Since I was eager to avoid putting boys to the test, I never took up smoking. It's a good thing this site wasn't around then. I would've shown my mom the pictures of gals in sexy outfits with alluring curls of cigarette smoke wisping from their mouths. At Smoking Exotica, $5 gets you a lifetime entré to pics of sexy smoker chicks, plus erotic cig stories, personals, and "late breaking news"—whatever that means in this context.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

CHARLES HAYNES'S RADICAL SEX
www.fifth-mountain.com/radical_sex

NEW "Being a sex radical means being defiant as well as deviant." Goes a little farther than just burning the old bra! For the kink aficionado all dressed up and not sure where to let go, this site steers you to links for like-minded piercers, whip-and-chain devotees, crossdressers, and a host of other alternatives to the him-and-her missionary standards of old sitcom TV. Because we all know Mr. Brady was really gay, and Greg dated his mom. Links only—set against a dull gray background.

CONTENT 1 DESIGN 2 LINKS 5 OVERALL 3



IN UNIFORM
www.teleport.com/~uniform/home.html

NEW The Village People knew it, and so did the Gang of Four: Men in uniforms have a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Firemen? Cops? Cowboys? Sexy, sexy, sexy! Here you can gawk at an online sampling of *In Uniform*, a mag filled with photos, stories, and erotica about men in various professional get-ups. Geared to gay men but plenty pleasurable to gals, too. Now you can see the highway patrol officer as you've only imagined him.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 3

GOT A PROBLEM?

THE SEXUAL RECOVERY INSTITUTE
www.sexualrecovery.com

Folks can develop addictions to masturbation, voyeuristic sex, paying for sex, exhibitionist sex, and so on—just as they can for any drug. This site provides tests to gauge whether you are a sex junkie. Various treatment resources and recovery literature are listed—as well as a cybersex checklist. By SRI's criteria, I'm a major cybersex addict. But then I remembered: It's not really a problem, it's just my job.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

ASK AUNT SQUISHY
www.boutell.com/squishy

NEW Aunt Squishy has a degree in psychology and is attending grad school. She also claims to have done a fair amount of field research in the old sex department. So instead of e-mailing one of those real sex doctors, why not try a Q&A with an amateur like Squishy? You have to be patient because she responds to only a few letters every couple of weeks. But her connection to reality beats the pros' hands down. Can you picture Dr. Ruth saying, "Whether he's 14 or 26, he's



an asshole for taking advantage of you for sex"? Sometimes the truth is not delicate.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

THE FIRST TIME

FIRST TIME
myfirsttime.com

NEW My first time "doing it" was a nightmare—and my screams of pain definitely didn't help things. At First Time, you can read other people's considerably more romantic (if somewhat less believable) tales of de-virgination here—or post your own. The vitals are listed at the top of each testimonial: gender, age now, age then, and location of cherry picking. The stories range from poignant to blasé. As one storyteller sums it up, "Afterwards, we threw the condom out of the window and that was that."

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

LET'S HEAR IT FOR CHASTITY!
www.ohana.com/~dphears/gbyg/chastity.html

NEW A wholesome Christian site, doling out good old-fashioned reasons from the Lord that explain why you should just say no. Apparently, masturbation counts as sex outside the bounds of your sacred marriage and "often leads to hell for all eternity." More advice: "You must not let your eyes wander in vain curiosity, examine risqué shop windows, bawdy TV shows, or gloat over obscene ads along the highways or in our newspapers and magazines." In other words, you must blind your eyes to save your soul!

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

ROMANCE

COURTSHIP CORNER
www.talkcity.com/courtship

NEW Love is a many-splendored thing. But the song neglects to tell you it also takes a lot of work. This site boasts more tips to keep your passion afloat than any episode of *The Love Boat*. It recommends romance books, suggests courting shorthand (LJBF = Let's Just Be Friends), translates "I love you" into other languages (in Portuguese, say "Amo-te"), even offers Shakespearean love sonnets. If all else fails, check out the free personals, a matchmaker, and live chat.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4



AHA!'S ROMANCE WRITER
www.familygames.com/romance.htm

NEW Got a sudden craving for '50s-style dramatic romance stories set on the corner of Dada and Noir? Download the software from this site, launch the mini-application, and then click your reload button for a series of funny-but-limited paragraphs from romance novels that never were: "'Come to me, my dewy, doll-faced delight!' he said quietly, nervously adjusting his artificial leg, and it dawned on her that her days of loneliness were over..." Beautiful old movie posters accompany every new story generated.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

GAY/LESBIAN/BI

CRUISINGFORSEX.COM
www.cruisingforsex.com

If you've been lookin' for love in all the wrong places—and you're a single gay guy—this free site may steer you toward salvation. Come here for international guides on where to find other dudes in the mood for amorous adventures and, especially, how (and where) to avoid entrapment spots. Timely updates are posted, usually with a dramatic story detailing an unfortunate incident (like an unfair arrest). Reviews of other gay sites and some gay fiction are available, too.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

THE BI-SEXUAL GIRLS HOME PAGE
www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/7303

NEW Bi-girls are all over the Net. Every second picture at a porn site shows gals engaging in a little afternoon delight with each other. But those are cheesecake photos made by guys for guys—and most chicks find them boring. For an alternative take, stop in here. You'll find links to articles and resources for gay/bi youths and adults, safe-sex and S&M play info, and a guide to gay West Hollywood. No pics, though: That's left to the other 99% of sex sites out there.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

VINTAGE MALE PHOTO STUDIO
members.aol.com/davidp111/beefcake.html

NEW These days, mags showing male skin are as common as their female counterparts. But whereas women have always been accepted as erotic material, male erotica was often treated as a no-no in the U.S: It existed, but in the guise of "artist's models" or "physique photographs." VMPS uncovers sample old-style photos from 1947 to 1958, made from their original negatives and offered for sale. No nudes, but lots of tight swimsuits.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

TOYS & GAMES

LOVE
www.adaweb.com/~GroupZ/LOVE

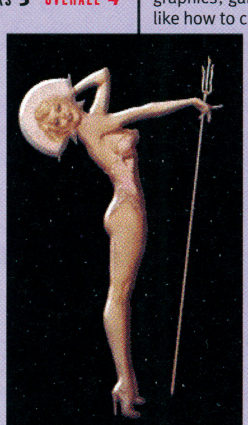
Love can be a maze of confusing thoughts and frozen pictures. With that in mind, this site's design forces you to navigate through love stories blindly, choosing to click forward or back, up or down, and sometimes coming to sudden unexplained halts. Each of the seven stories has seven pages; a mathematical methodology that makes it a Rubik's Cube of love. Stories range from arty romantic interludes to musings from the Marquis de Sade.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

ADULT SEXTROPOLIS
aaadultsextropolis.com

NEW A megamall of sex toys, Sextropolis serves up flashy graphics, illustrated erotic stories, a $7/month chat room, and skimpy pics—all designed to inspire you to use a phone sex service or buy its products. Sex toys are listed by subject. Looking for a Nina Hartley doll with a realistic molded face, vagina, and anus? You've come to the right place.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4



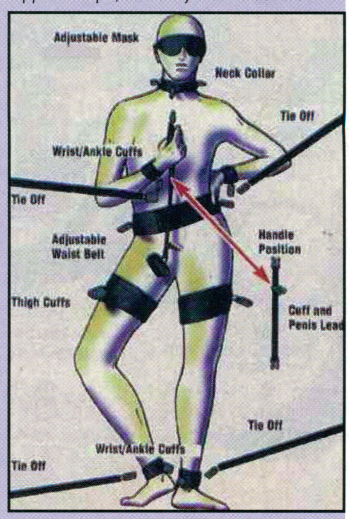
STRIP BLACKJACK
204.254.228.100/blackjack/blackjack.html

NEW More addictive than slot machines, funnier then the Liberace museum, and more stimulating than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick, this simple strip blackjack game seems to be the brainchild of one self-absorbed—but sexy—black man. And more power to him! If your hand beats his, he removes a piece of clothing. If he beats you, well, on to a new hand. Does Vegas have games like this?

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

LUVTOYS: AN ADULT TOY SHOP
www.luvtoys.com/welcome.html

NEW When you buy sex toys, you want to deal with a reputable vendor. Luvtoy's been selling through the Internet since 1991, and guarantees that its dildos, nipple clamps, and truly bizarre assortment of novelties are offered here at the "lowest prices on the Internet." Every product is illustrated, which definitely makes browsing through this mini-mall much more fun than tuning into the Home Shopping Network.



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

EVE'S GARDEN: EROTIC BOUTIQUE FOR WOMEN
www.evesgarden.com

NEW Ever get one of those sex-toy catalogs in the mail—wrapped in brown paper of course—chock-full of overly cosmeticized girls dressed in tight leopard-skin outfits? It transforms the simple, life-affirming act of buying a sex toy into some kind of furtive, sleazy experience. This site offers a welcome alternative: tasteful sex toys designed by and for women. Though the site skimps a bit on graphics, gals can glean invaluable info—like how to carve a vegetable dildo to measure size preference. Makes one happy vegetable.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

TOM'S ADULT TICKLING SITE
www.televar.com/~thawkins/disc.html

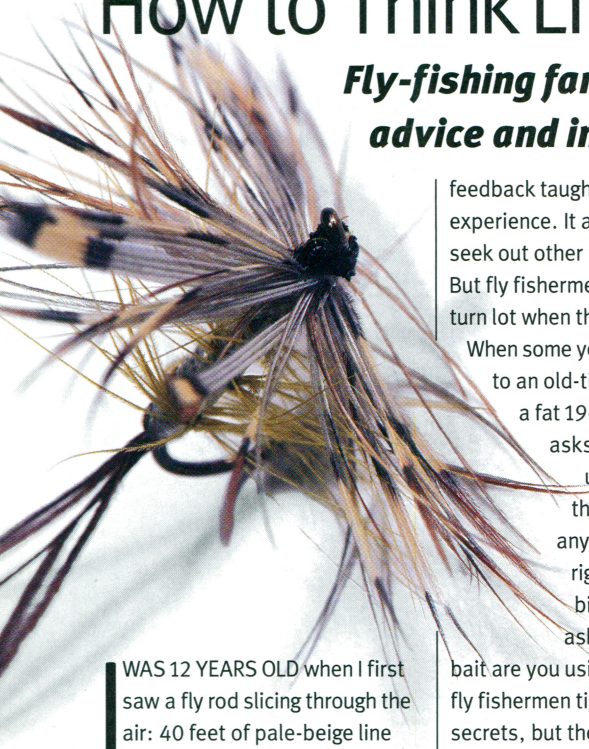
NEW Tickling games have their starting point in innocent bouts of childhood fun, but their erotic possibilities have always lurked in the recesses of adult minds. Feathers and fingertips are the tools of choice among practitioners of these ecstasy/torture amusements, and Tom's gallery displays men and woman—real and animated—using both to indulge in erotic tickle play. TATS provides a full history of tickling, replete with photos of barefooted lasses getting tickled mercilessly. When you consider the number of tickle-specific links listed here, you'll see that this enterprise is no laughing matter.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

SPORTS | BY BRUCE RASKIN

How to Think Like a Trout

Fly-fishing fans find compleat angling advice and instruction online



I WAS 12 YEARS OLD when I first saw a fly rod slicing through the air: 40 feet of pale-beige line whipped back and shot forward, delivering a tiny imitation insect to the surface of the river. Like the plump rainbow trout the fisherman eventually landed, I was solidly hooked.

My stepfather, an accomplished angler, wasted no time buying me a cheap fiberglass fly rod, hip boots, assorted flies, and other paraphernalia. Then he turned me loose. I quickly learned the quiet thrills of spotting trout rising to minuscule mayflies, of wading into a river and feeling the pure rush of water, of finally making a cast without hooking the back of my jacket.

But casting was just the first step. I still had to learn how to analyze the river, how to "match the hatch" (find the artificial fly that best imitated the insects on the water), how to think like a trout. Most importantly, I had to learn each river—every riffle, every pool, where fish fed at different times of the day and year.

My stepfather let me learn all this by trial and error. His lack of feedback taught me to learn from experience. It also taught me to seek out other mentors for advice. But fly fishermen tend to be a taciturn lot when they're on the river. When some young buck strolls up to an old-timer who's stalking a fat 19-inch rainbow and asks him what fly he's using, chances are the codger will offer any answer but the right one. (God forbid the rube should ask, "What kind of bait are you using?" Not only are fly fishermen tight with their trade secrets, but they also tend to look down on all other forms of angling as inferior arts.)

But get a gaggle of fly fishermen together off-stream—at a local fly shop or a nearby watering hole—and they turn positively gabby. And once you filter out the chest puffing, some pearls of practical wisdom may emerge.

For those of us who don't live near a fly shop, the Net is the best alternative. For example, I was recently preparing for a family (i.e., nonfishing) vacation to Mexico. But before we left, I couldn't resist posting one quick query on the rec.outdoors.fishing.fly newsgroup: "I'll be near Cancun in early August. Anyone know of good places for bone fishing?" I got enough worthwhile answers that I took my tackle along.

Or suppose I'm heading to southwest Montana for a little fishing. I can check out the Montana Troutfitters Fishing Report Web site for details on which rivers are fishing well and which flies are working. Ditto for Northern California (Northern California Fly Fishing), Oregon (the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Weekly Fishing Report), and other fishing hot spots across the country and around the world. The Virtual Flyshop and the Fly-Fishing Broadcast Network offer comprehensive compendia of fishing reports from both professional and amateur sources. These and other sites—such as VFS Magazine ("The First Internet Journal of Flyfishing") and Fly Fishing Network also offer chat rooms where serious anglers can swap tips. The Virtual Flyshop even offers you a quick, animated lesson in casting.

Of course, the only way you'll really learn to cast is by going out and practicing—over and over and over. But then, unlike an unwilling piano student drudging his way through scales for the umpteenth time, a dyed-in-the-neoprene fly fisher needs no prodding whatsoever to head out to a trout stream to "practice." ■

THE SITES

MONTANA TROUTFITTERS
www.troutfitters.com
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA FLY FISHING
www2.ecst.csuchico.edu/~jschlich/Flyfish/flyfish.html
ODFW WEEKLY FISHING REPORT
www.dfw.state.or.us/ODFWhtml/RecReports/Fishing.html
THE VIRTUAL FLYSHOP: FLY FISHERMAN'S ON-LINE NETWORK
www.flyshop.com
FBN: FLY-FISHING BROADCAST NETWORK
www.fbn-flyfish.com
VFS MAGAZINE: THE FIRST INTERNET JOURNAL OF FLYFISHING
www.flyshop.com/VFSM
FLY FISHING NETWORK
www.flyfishingnetwork.com

Bruce Raskin is editor for franchise development at Parenting *magazine. Send e-mail comments and questions to postings@webmagazine.com.*

SPORTS Sites

BY EZRA GALE & BELINDA CHOI

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

GOLF

ASK THE GOLF GUZZLER
www.s2f.com/jiseler/guzzler.html
NEW Though it has a gin-and-tonic image, golf's most popular drink is beer. No one knows this better than the Golf Guzzler, a Michigan linkster bent on sharing his wisdom with us. Sample Q&A: "Q: Titanium—is it worth the extra cost? A: You are confused. The name is 'Heineken.' And the answer is 'No.'" The man's answers may be tongue-in-cheek, but they're studded with great links. If you want to know the proper etiquette for urinating on the links, the Guzzler is your guy.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5

WELCOME TO LPGA.COM
www.lpga.com
NEW The sister organization to the PGA has done it right. In fact, the LPGA site wins some holes against the PGA site: It's more user-friendly and down-to-earth; and it's laid out better, with sections on becoming a member, finding golf teachers, and getting girls interested in the sport. The historical backgrounders, schedules, ticket information, and current news are all easily accessible. The boys could take some notes on this one.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

WELCOME TO THE PGA TOUR.COM!
www.pgatour.com
NEW A corporate site that's actually worthwhile. Look beyond the little golf ball icons and the ridiculous number of stats, and you'll find information on Senior, PGA, and Nike tournaments, amazing player profiles, a search feature, and up-to-the-minute scores from IBM Live Scoring. The site promises audio/video clips and access to the PGA's golf databases in the future.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

PUTT-PUTT GOLF COURSES OF AMERICA HOME PAGE
putt-putt.com
NEW Don't confuse Putt-Putt with its ugly white-trash cousin, mini-golf. Putt-Putt was created in 1954 by Don Clayton as "a golf course in which not luck and chance, but the player's putting skill was rewarded." Learn about Putt-Putt's history and locations (now in Indonesia!), plus other fun options, such as Go-Karts, batting cages, and bumper boats. If you're really into it, you can find out about going pro (i.e., running a Putt-Putt franchise).
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

TRIVIA GOLF COUNTRY CLUB—GOLF TRIVIA, GOLF CONTEST, GOLF PRIZES
www.triviagolf.com
NEW A technically accomplished golf trivia game that promises all kinds of cool prizes (as soon as they line up the requisite sponsors). The game keeps score as you answer multiple-choice questions. Each topic is equivalent to a hole: Every wrong answer sets you back two strokes, and a succession of correct answers earns you a birdie. Try to change

FLY COLLECTION COURTESY DONALD MORGAN. PHOTOGRAPHY LEIGH BEISCH

your answer and you get a cute error message warning, "No mulligans!"
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

REAL BASEBALL

THE LANSING LUGNUTS
198.109.165.166/lugnuts/default.html

NEW You may remember the Kansas City Royals' Class "A" team as the Sultans of Springfield, Illinois. Upon moving to Michigan, it became the Lansing Lugnuts, with a new stadium (Oldsmobile Park) and a new mascot (the Big Lug—think a pierced Barney with nuts and bolts in his nose). The team's site scores with current game updates, broadcast schedules, and a downloadable Lugnuts' theme song ("Go, Nuts!"). Track your favorite players' progress through the farm system; then order your tickets online.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL ONLINE ARCHIVES
www.nc5.infi.net/~moxie/nlb/nlb.html



NEW Finally, a site whose cheesy audio greeting (in this case, an organ rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game") won't grate on your nerves. These archives present an excellent overview of NL baseball, with well-written articles from the *Black Ball News*, short synopses of successful teams from the 1920–1955 era, and bios of famous players. Coverage of more teams and players is promised.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

AMATEUR BASEBALL UMPIRE HOME PAGE
www.superaje.com/~brenmcla

NEW Ever get upset at an umpire's call and think you could do better? Let amateur umpire Brent McLaren teach you about umpiring, and you may change your mind. McLaren exhaustively covers plate and base positions, stances, mental approaches, and equipment. He describes the signals, covers the controversies (as in , "Who the hell needs the balk, anyway?"), and quotes from the rule book whenever possible. This guy's a machine.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

EDITOR'S CHOICE: JACKIE ROBINSON SOCIETY

NEW With all the hoopla surrounding the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's breaking baseball's color barrier, who'd have thought that one of the best tribute sites would come from a bunch of students at the University of Texas? Well-designed and easy on the wrist, the Jackie Robinson Society not only provides basic history and background on this great baseball player, but does so thoughtfully and without the usual excess sentiment. Check out the letter Robinson wrote to President Eisenhower, and interviews with the grandson of the man who signed Robinson to the Dodgers and with former Dodger pitcher Carl Erskine, plus an extensive image gallery.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5



www.utexas.edu:80/students/jackie

THE GREG MADDUX SHRINE
www.macshack.com/johns/greg/greg.html

NEW The site seems so enticing, with promises of "A Conversation with Greg Maddux" and "One of Mad Dog's Best Games in '95." Too bad it's so glitchy. The Shrine takes many, many seconds to download, it's unorganized, and some of the pages are unreadable (yellow on white is not good design). When the site functions properly, however, you get lots of stats, a card price list, and the lowdown on where Maddux got the nickname "Nate Luck."
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

EXTREME

ABOUT CLIMBING
www.aboutclimbing.com

NEW Some of us would rather climb Everest from the safety of our computer room, thank you very much. And this online climbing zine (part of the larger, outdoor sports–oriented Mountain Zone) is where we'll start. With an elegance you won't experience when living in a tent for weeks on end, About Climbing delivers thrilling worldwide coverage of extreme mountain climbing, with breathtaking photography, a calendar of upcoming events, a gear guide, a resort directory, and a book store.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

HECKLER
www.heckler.com

NEW If Heckler's motto of "Skate, Snow, Music" is your mantra, too, you'll have a half-pipe full of fun at the zine's cyberspace outpost. Interviews with rising pro boarders range from the enlightening to the mundane (sample probing question: "Who are your sponsors?"). Heckler also includes features on other items of interest to the skate community, like an interview with punk god Jon Spencer and guides to brewing beer and making your own ramp.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

ADVENTURETIME
www.adventuretime.com

NEW If words like "Heliskiing" and "Streetluge" don't have you reaching for your Swedish-English dictionary, AdventureTime is for you. Beckoning those who think it's perfectly normal to jump off bridges with giant rubber bands tied around their ankles, the zine serves up first-person accounts of outdoor adventures like mountain biking, climbing, hang-gliding, rafting, and skateboarding. Be sure to check out the Mudhog, an extreme-sport devotee who tests gear in the, uh, extreme manner it was designed for (hint to gear manufacturers: politely decline if he calls you).



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

FANTASY BASEBALL

JOHN MOSEY'S FANTASY BASEBALL HOME PAGE
www.mosey.com/fantasy/fanball.html

NEW John Mosey deserves the online fantasy baseball MVP award. Marshaling a stacked lineup of player ratings, depth charts, and—of course—price lists, Mosey does more than cover the bases. He offers a bulletin board for those looking to join a league, a chat room, extensive analysis (which fantasy ballplayers will devour), and more baseball links than you can shake a 38-ouncer at.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

JOHN BENSON ON BASEBALL
www.johnbenson.com

NEW Benson is the *Sporting News*' fantasy baseball columnist. So it's a safe bet his opinions are worth more than the guy who's bidding against you for Mo Vaughn on draft day. A recent edition of his homepage served up a feature article on rating younger players and a talk with Braves manager Bobby Cox about building a winning team. Big-hearted guy that he is, Benson also gives you his (not toll-free) phone number if you need (and can afford) some personal advice.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

NEWS

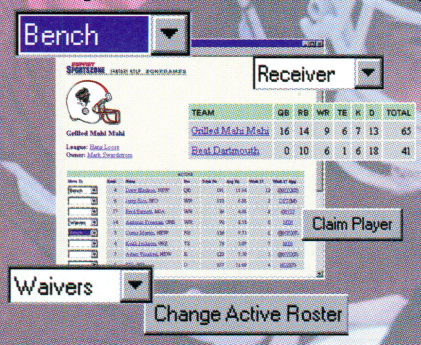
USA TODAY'S BASEBALL WEEKLY
www.usatoday.com/bbwfront.htm

NEW Baseball fanatics who once parked in front of their local newsstand waiting for the latest issue of *Baseball Weekly* to hit the rack can now park in front of their computer monitor instead. *USA Today*'s weekly online tome is a godsend for baseball junkies everywhere. It covers everything from weekly Q&A's with players and managers to divisional roundups, from minor-league updates to in-depth analysis of players and trends as the season progresses. The year's worth of back issues ensures you won't miss anything when you finally tear yourself away to go on vacation.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE SPORTING NEWS
www.sportingnews.com

Out of the countless sports news sites on the Web, why visit this one? Well, for one thing, it's free—unlike some others we could name. The trivia game, chats, and cartoon contest aren't great, but this online hub hosts one of the country's definitive national sports rags—covering MLB, NBA, NHL, NFL, college sports, and more from a fun-lovin' perspective. Don't miss The Fly, *TSN*'s sneering, cigar-smoking sports reporter.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

You provide the strategy, leadership and cunning. We'll handle the details.



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http://espn.sportszone.com/promo/THEWEB/

BY CARLA KING

Easy Writer

A motorcycle maven rides cross-country—and reports back on the Web

THAT BLUE CHEVY PICKUP has been on my tail for miles, gawking or impatient, but he isn't passing me because the road is twisting and turning alongside broccoli fields, deep ditches, and a very soft shoulder. I think I can maintain the acceleration and balance with one hand as I remove my map from its plastic sleeve, but the wind nudges my motorcycle toward the ditch, and I have to return my grip to the handlebars or commit to roadkill and reincarnation.

So the map flies over my head and is gone. No, it's flattened against the driver's side window of the pickup, which has slowed down and put the wipers on, shredding the map into wrinkled patches of colored paper. Does he pull over and help me salvage the remains? Uh-uh, but at least when he sees that the long blond braid down the back of my leather jacket belongs to a woman—and not some pinko hippie freak—he stops pawing his gun rack.

So I smile, because this trip was a good idea. I am feeling very escaped, very *Easy Rider*. You know: freedom, dropping out, turning on, plugging in. I've been driving a Ural, a Russian knockoff of a 1938 BMW, complete with sidecar—the kind Steve McQueen rides in *The Great Escape*. But in my trunk, next to the Siberian toolset, the duct tape, and the baling wire, is a laptop computer.

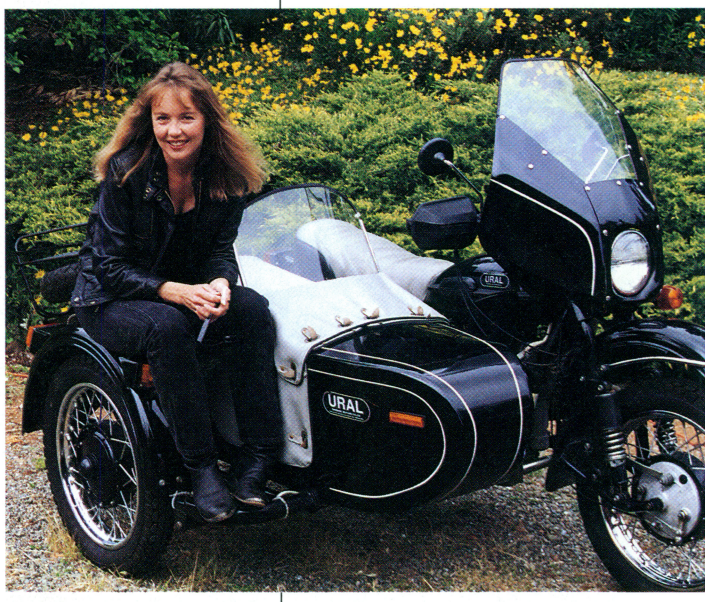
SHIFTING GEARS

Each week I had to find someplace to plug in my PowerBook so I could dispatch a story to GNN, which published it on its travel site. The deal was I got to keep my job as a writer while observing America's borders as I circumnavigated the contiguous 48 states on my cool new motorcycle. I'd wanted to do it since I lived in Europe. Of course, we don't really have borders the way Europe does—or do we? I was going to find out.

I passed through some fabulously seedy places like Portal, North Dakota, where I stayed in a dusty trailer-park hotel across from Al Capone's old saloon by the train tracks. At one time, pistol-packing outlaws clattered into this bar on horseback, yelling and shooting to obscure the sound of bootleg liquor being heaped into the basement. Fortunes had been won and lost, fame and notoriety had lived here. But like most border towns, it's broken down now, abandoned except by truckers and society's residue: penniless train-hoppers, hopeful gold-miners hitching to Alaska, hardscrabble hobos, and a biker-journalist with a laptop reporting on chance encounters, forgetting what it's like to be in one place for a while.

When I reached Portal, I was getting tired, and I considered staying on across the tracks from the ghost of Al Capone. The local café was looking for a part-time waitress, the gas station needed a part-time mechanic, and it looked like GNN might let me keep writing dispatches. But then one night a tornado casually took the municipal water tower away to Oz. "No worse than earthquakes," the townsfolk said, but I moved on anyway, to the next languishing border town, and then on to another.

By this time I was getting loads of e-mail from people informing me of the route I *should* have taken between Point A and Point B. Messages streamed in from people asking why I hadn't gone to Sturgis, South Dakota, and how come I wasn't scared to travel alone. And a sizable number of men e-mailed me (unaware that I was already immersed in a Victorian letter-writing love affair by e-mail with a man I'd met before I left home): "If you're coming by Akron... St. Petersburg... Bakersfield, etc." they wrote, "let me know... I'm not the handsomest guy in the country, but you wouldn't be ashamed to take me home to Mama."



But it wasn't all depressing. The seediness of half-ghost border towns was contrasted with places like Seattle, Oregon's Bandol by the Sea, Vancouver, B.C., and the American South, with Mississippi's Redneck Riviera all diamond white with emerald waters. By September I was in New Orleans, and then on to Big Bend east of El Paso, followed by Arcosanti, Paolo Soleri's eco-city in the Arizona desert. Then one day I rode into California where I somehow ended up in Beverly Hills, singing a last happy birthday to a beatific but exhausted Timothy Leary, along with Tony Curtis and Ram Dass and a hundred of his closest friends.

BIKERS IN CYBERSPACE

GNN has since fallen by the wayside, but travel on the Web has not. Just enter the words "motorcycle travel" in your search engine. With luck, you'll find my "American Borders," as well as "Hell's Buddhas," who traveled through India on a spiritual quest. You'll find journals of trips through the American Southwest and tour operators who lead groups through Australia on dirt bikes. There are women's biker pages, gay biker pages, naked biker pages, and philosophical *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* pages.

Best of all, there's mechanical help for any obscure antique bike you can imagine. The BMW Riders Association even has an online mechanic. And an amazing number of people, many of them in Oslo and Milan, are intimate with the Ural. Thank goodness, because when I was stuck in Marathon,

Alberta, 200 miles from the nearest mechanic, I needed all the advice I could get on the art of valve replacement. I could have used a girl mechanics newsgroup too, for advice on how to keep men from literally yanking tools out of my hands in the middle of roadside repair jobs.

Aside from the advantage of on-the-spot mechanical advice, I don't think that the Internet's changed the actual roadtrip *much*. Bikers may be developing a new community in cyberspace, but what's really different is the selection and availability of guidebooks, online campground reservation services, and trip planners. Clubs like Iron Butt publish safety tips and rally reports on their Web sites. Magazines, especially Motorcycle Online, contain tons of information on bikes, trips, products, and rallies.

And if you long for the camaraderie of a club, it's as close as your keyboard. Members of local chapters will invite you to come by for a beer or, better yet, a good night's sleep in their guest room. All kinds of travelers have already discovered that an Internet connection not only saves on hotel bills but introduces you to lifelong friends as well. And somewhere on the Web, you can probably find a biker who has already blazed a trail to the place you want to go.

THE SITES

AMERICAN BORDERS
www.verbum.com/jaunt/borders
HELL'S BUDDHAS
www.hellsbuddhas.com
MOTORCYCLE ONLINE
www.motorcycle.com
BMW RIDERS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL HOME PAGE
www.bmwra.org
URAL AMERICA MOTORCYCLES
www.ural.com
WWW.SIDECAR.COM
www.sidecar.com
WOMEN OF THE ROAD
www.dgi.net/Women-of-the-Road
IRON BUTT ASSOCIATION
www.ironbutt.com
ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE
skynet.ul.ie/~chopper/zen

Carla King started riding and writing at age 14. Send e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.

TRAVEL Sites | BY KARMEN BUTTERER

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: FIELDING'S THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACES

FIELDING'S Dangerous Places
A Little Knowledge Is a Dangerous Thing . . .

NEW Whether you want to visit unspeakably hostile nations or read sensationalist stories about them, this site—based on Fielding's book of the same name—is a gold mine. First, it covers all the obvious locales: Bosnia, Chechnya, Chile, Rwanda, Lebanon, and Malaysia (not to mention Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Washington). After you've picked a place, dive into historical analyses, descriptions of the "players," real travel information, itemized danger "things" (like train stations, political rallies, mountain climbing, and malaria), and first-person grim tales. No photos and no links, but the editors do include a waiver of liability; they don't recommend you actually visit these places.

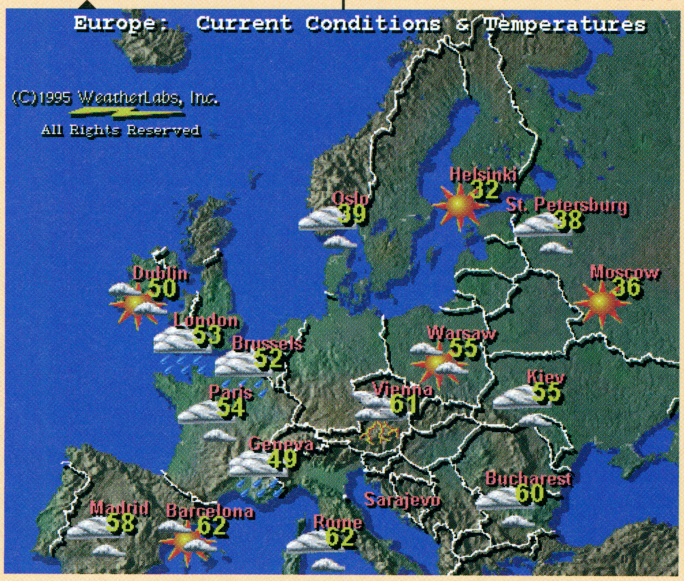
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

www.fieldingtravel.com/dp

WEATHER INFORMATION

THE WEATHER CHANNEL
www.weather.com/weather/maps
NEW The folks who brought you 'round-the-clock weather are applying their meteorological know-how to a Web site that delivers more stationary fronts and predicted highs than any 11 o'clock news update. Maps, satellite and radar images, time-lapse loops, and updates every 30 minutes will satisfy even the most obsessive weather watcher. Health and allergy info, boating and beach conditions, travel advisories, and tips on optimal gardening weather round out the offerings.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE WEATHER LAB
www.WeatherLabs.com
NEW You'll never again get stuck wearing a parka and ski boots in 85-degree weather. The folks at The Weather Lab track conditions in 2,000 localities worldwide. You can consult radar and satellite images, ski reports, airline delays, and current temperatures in places from Belize City to Beijing. Life-saving advice on what to do in a weather emergency (flash flood, tornado, etc.) should secure you a heroic spot on the local news—assuming a natural disaster strikes during your travels.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4



WEATHERNET
cirrus.sprl.umich.edu/wxnet
NEW Sometimes you want the weather report and you want it fast—no scrolling, no clicking around. At WeatherNet you enter a city/state name or three-letter airport code and get instant weather news. No matter where you're going—or where you're stuck—these tireless weather-watchers want you to be in the know. Get a jump on that pre-meeting "How about this weather?" chatter—or brush up on the climate where your mom lives and give her a call. You two can talk about the weather for hours.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

BUSINESS TRAVEL

REC.TRAVEL LIBRARY
www.nectec.or.th/rec-travel
NEW Take a journey to the land of links. This library's fabulous set of pointers culls tips on hotel safety, dining, travel options for the disabled, how to manage in less developed countries, and how to avoid scams. It even offers suggestions on how to take pictures once you get there. To make things easier still, some of the links are arranged in handy table format, like the compilation of countries that support left- or right-side driving.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

BIZTRAVEL
www.biztravel.com/V4/newhome.cfm
NEW Next time you've got a business trip to book, why not get some help? Biztravel.com lets you book flight reservations, car rentals, and hotel rooms, and offers actual human assistance at the end of an 800 number. You can read travel news—like who's on strike where—and get the scoop on city-specific hotels, restaurants, maps, weather, airport information, even driving directions. The site offers similar details about more than 70 international cities, with the occasional opportunity to save some bucks if you order tix online.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS TRAVELERS
www.abt-travel.com
NEW While they don't have secret handshakes or initiation rites, ABT members do have strength in numbers. And that may provide enough of an edge to help 'em push their way through the throngs of tourists. Benefits for members include reduced hotel rates and travel packages, discounted limo service, lost luggage services, travel insurance, and more—plus name-dropping at the reservation counter, much to the irritation of others. Costs around $75 to sign up.
CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

EQUESTRIAN TRAVELS

BOOJUM EXPEDITIONS
www.boojumx.com
NEW Have you ever fantasized about trekking across Mongolia, Tibet, China, Argentina, Venezuela, or even Yellowstone National Park on horse- or camel-back? Then trot over to Boojum Expeditions, which specializes in making that particular dream come true. Not sure whether this is the vacation for you? Here's your chance to read up on what to expect, peruse an extensive photo collection from past journeys, and check out lots of regional maps. Down-to-earth explanations from your guides make you feel like you're traveling with friends.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

NATIONAL TRAIL PAGE
www.mindspring.com/~n9giv/trlmain.htm
NEW If you're planning to bring Trigger along on your next vacation, this comprehensive listing will point you to trail-ride locations all over the United States. Choose a state and then view the grid detailing information on trail/park name, location, terrain, facilities, trails, phone, map, and fees. Includes links to parks that have their own Web pages. One Australian entry here, too. Is an *international* version in the works?
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

EQUITOUR WORLDWIDE RIDING HOLIDAYS
www.webcom.com/~wildwest/etour.html
NEW "Sip tea with the headman in a remote Rajasthan village where no other European has sat, drink honey beer with a Maasai warrior in his manyatta, or share a bottle of wine with a French shepherd high in the Massif Central," suggest your hosts at Equitour. They're the travel specialists who find intriguing and exotic new ways for riders at all levels to caravan through Australia, New Zealand, Portugal,



Spain, Italy, England, Ireland, Kenya, India, the U.S., and other lands. Travel itineraries and photos posted on this glorified ad space will have you whinnying with excitement.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 2

EVENT FINDERS

EVENTSEEKER
www.eventseeker.com

NEW Need more information about the Brussels International Festival of Fantasy Films? How about some help scheduling some meteor showers into your vacation? Or celebrating Victory Day in Estonia? For a searchable database of international events, stop at EventSeeker. The site catalogs hundreds of international business events (such as trade shows and conferences), as well as festivals and carnivals. Bonus feature: If you can't track down what you're looking for, the staff at EventSeeker will research it for you and report back. What could be handier?

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

QUANDO
www.quando.com/quando

NEW Don't sit home on a Saturday night wondering what to do. A quickie visit to Quando (still in development) will deliver more activities than a cruise-ship social director. We're talking thousands of choices here, in more than 1,600 cities–the whole kit and kaboodle easily searchable by where (U.S. cities), when (today, this week, this month, or even this year), or what (sports, music, theater, etc.). A random search turned up everything from a checkers tournament in Indianapolis to a play titled *Cross-Dressing in the Depression*.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

NATIONAL PARKS

GORP: U.S. NATIONAL PARKS AND PRESERVES
www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/US_National_Park/main.htm

If you still think that Jellystone is a national park, check out the National Park section of the GORP (Great Outdoor Recreation Pages) megasite. Here, you'll find information on 57 national parks, all handily pinpointed on a map. Want to do more on your camping trip than roast marshmallows? GORP provides a laundry list of companies that offer all manner of adventure excursions, from white-water rafting in the Grand Canyon to horseback riding in Jelly-, er, Yellowstone.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK
www.thecanyon.com/nps

Even if you never set a hiking boot into the Grand Canyon, you don't have to forgo a Sonoran Desert belt buckle, Hopi bear-claw earrings, or a buffalo maiden kachina doll. These items and more can be purchased on the park's Web site. Vacationers planning a visit to the Really Big Hole in the Ground can study trail maps, get up-to-date news on park conditions, and print out back-country permit request forms.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
www.nps.gov/glac

The government-speak on the Glacier Park homepage—"provides over one million acres of habitat and protection for a wonderful variety of wildlife and wildflowers"—gives you little sense of the Park's rugged beauty and raw wilderness. For down and dirty information, skip to the site's visitor information center, where you'll find trail maps, daily weather reports, lodging info, photos, tips for backcountry camping—even a "mammal checklist" that covers everything from the pygmy shrews to Big Mama grizzlies.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
www.compugraph.com/yosemite

There's something undeniably odd about sitting indoors reading a detailed background survey of what may be the most spectacular piece of wilderness in the big, beautiful U.S. of A. But information is just what you'll need to brave the hordes who turn that wilderness into a mini-city every summer. Get the facts on activities, lodging, and weather conditions so you can make the most of your visit. One warning: The site is currently under construction, which means lots of bugs. But then again, this *is* the Great Outdoors.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

CRUISE SHIPS

MAJESTY CRUISE LINE
www.asource.com/majesty

NEW Grab your tiara and hit the deck with Majesty Cruise Line, the sophisticated cruise company that can whisk you away to the Bahamas, Key West, Mexico, or Bermuda. Check out the creature comforts available on the Princess, Baroness, and Empress Decks; view the royal purple dining rooms; or book a private wedding starting at $375, complete with witnesses in case the royals in your life object to your chosen mate. Details like what's inside the rooms and the full itinerary make this site thoroughly helpful.



CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES
www.asource.com/carnival

NEW Kathie Lee can't stop singing CCL's praises, but you may want more than a jingle when planning your cruise. Though much of this site was under construction last we checked, you *can* make reservations, check out deckside activities and routes (to Alaska, the Caribbean, and Mexico mostly), and get a sense of what your room might look like onboard the whimsically named *Ecstasy* or *Fantasy*. No wonder they're fun ships.

CONTENT 2 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

ROYAL CARIBBEAN CRUISE LINE
www.tiac.net/vacation/rccl

NEW Wondering whatever happened to the Captain and Tenille? They've been playing for audiences on ships from the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line. Royal's site gives you the full scoop on the vessels (new or old, big or small), plus activity info (shuffleboard, aerobics, kids' programs) and interactive package selection and booking. How much will it cost? Consult the Check Fares option for a painless way to see whether you'll be basking on the deck of the *Enchantment* on your way to St. Maarten or making reservations for Aunt Beatrice's in Jersey again.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE
www.tiac.net/vacation/Norwegian

NEW Combining "the blues" with a luxury cruise may seem like an oxymoron, but you really can swim in kidney-shaped azure pools on the way to Bermuda while suffering from mood indigo. Koko Taylor and company may even help sing the blues out of you. Meanwhile, Norwegian Cruises also offers stellar lineups for jazz, pop, and country cruises, with stars such as Lee Konitz, Dave Frischberg, Milt Jackson, Joe Williams, Little Anthony and the Imperials, and Merle Haggard. Destinations and reservations now available too.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

BICYCLE TOURING

THE BICYCLE TOURING SELECT
webhotel.uni-c.dk/dcf/tourindx.htm

NEW Feel like hopping on your bike and peddling across the country or the world? Read the sage words of fellow two-wheelers first. The Bicycle Touring Select provides practical information, including advice for your first tour, a list of folks who can hook you up with like-minded cyclists across the world, packing lists, maps, and stories from people who have biked the path before you. Lots of links. Lots of friendly advice. Lots of great places to bike.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

TRAVELING WITH YOUR BICYCLE
www.nicom.com/%7Egeorgef/access

NEW Say you're going to ride across Alaska next summer. But you live in New York and need to get your trusty bike—outfitted just the way you like it—to your start destination. Check here before sending the bike from point A to point B, and you'll gain insights from cyclists who've already done it. Experienced bikers describe dealing with airline restrictions, getting to the airport on a bike, and finding reliable newsgroups and links to consult.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

STEVE'S AMAZING BICYCLE TRIP
www.isomedia.com/homes/sleroux/biketrip/contents.htm

NEW Still working at that unfulfilling job? Never adjusted to the 9-to-5 grind? Take a look at what Steve did to dislodge his state-of-life malaise: He biked more than 1,700 miles from Richmond, B.C., to San Francisco, inspired by others who made the leap into bicycling adventure. Follow his diary and reap some vicarious thrills. Great vacation photos keep you rooting for Steve to find nirvana.



CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

ATLANTIC CANADA CYCLING INFORMATION SITE
fox.nstn.ca/~cycling/AtlCanCycling.html

NEW You can save dough and hassles by bicycling across Canada's maritime provinces the next time you want to enjoy a foreign vacation. No trains, no planes, no translators needed. Just hop over the border and start pedaling. Before you go, take advantage of all of the information the nice Canadians have put together here so you can have a successful trip. The site includes tours, race schedules, an assistance network, and a historic, geographic, and cultural crash-course to help you get through Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

AMUSEMENT PARKS

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA
www.usf.com

Want to experience the Back to the Future ride at Universal Studios, but don't feel like driving to Florida and paying those pesky entrance fees? Then catch the QuickTime movie instead. It won't look as impressive on your computer monitor as it does on the Omnimax screen, but you won't have to wait in line for an hour either. If you *are* Florida-bound, check out online ticket purchasing, special events info, and the electronic guide, which tells you what rides kids of different ages will like. And don't miss the knock-knock jokes—sure to annoy the whole family.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

WALT DISNEY WORLD
www.disney.com/DisneyWorld

In the great Michael Eisner tradition, there's an opportunity to spend a buck here with almost every click of the mouse: Make hotel reservations or purchase park passes, CDs, books, and other Disney paraphernalia. You can also register to become an "honored guest" at the Walt Disney World's 25th Anniversary Celebration. Print out a numbered identification card, and when you arrive at the Magic Kingdom "You'll receive special recognition." Hey, Mr. Eisner, can we get a few of your stock options instead?

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

CEDAR POINT
www.cedarpoint.com

This century-old amusement park located in Sandusky, Ohio, claims to have the world's largest roller coaster collection. But we're not talking antiques here: These are state-of-the-art rides like the Mantis—a $12 million hunk of steel featuring a 119-foot vertical loop, 103-foot dive loop, heavily banked 360-degree turn, 83-foot inclined loop, 360-degree flat spin, and figure-8 finale. Makes you queasy just reading about it. Check out photos of all 12 coasters and stats about their design, speed capacity, and physical dimensions—plus park employment information!

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

Al Roker Storms the Web

The Today Show*'s weatherman builds a new media empire*

IF YOU'VE SEEN HIM once, you feel like you've known him forever. That's the appeal of Al Roker, the NBC *Today Show*'s Emmy Award–winning weatherman famous for walking around Rockefeller Center, making small talk with the hoi polloi, interviewing celebrities, and hosting the occasional cooking or quiz show.

But Roker is not *just* a TV personality. He's also a Web designer. Unlike most celeb sites, his homepage (www.roker.com), is homespun, with postings from his daily journal and his own clever cartoons.

Mapping out big plans for connecting with a technology-savvy audience through the new media pipeline, Roker recently started his own multimedia company, Al Roker Productions, Inc. Like his PBS series on travel, Roker is "going places." *THE WEB Magazine* spoke to Roker about his Web site, media sensationalism, and the pros and cons of the Web's equal-access format.

What's a mild-mannered weatherman like you doing on the Web?

Some time ago, a friend who worked for Prodigy said, "You ought to do something with this great new vehicle, Al." Hey, why not? It's a new way of expressing myself.

Is it hard to express yourself as a weatherman?

There are other sides to me. If you look at some of my cartoons—and there's a whole archive of them on my site—you'll see some thought-provoking, darker ones. The same with the journals.

Indeed, I came across a number of particularly unflattering cartoons and journals on your site. Do you hate Geraldo?

> "The Web today is like television back in the '50s."

I don't hate Geraldo. He's a very talented man. If I mention him, it's just that I think he's taken certain topics and used them for his own personal gain.... I think there is some hypocrisy there, though I don't think it's necessarily intentional.

Not intentional? For instance?

Well, after the O. J. Simpson civil trial, there was a lot of yelling, a lot of screaming, which I don't think was necessary.

Do you think O. J. was guilty?

That's not the point. The point is it's time to heal, to move on and get past this, and, well, Geraldo was just stirring up the pot for ratings again. Look, he's a very rich man, lots of people like watching him, and Al Roker is probably no more than a pimple on his butt. Geraldo doesn't lose any sleep thinking about me.

Each day on the *Today Show* you walk outside to schmooze with passers-by. Do you feel that your Web site somehow brings people closer to you?

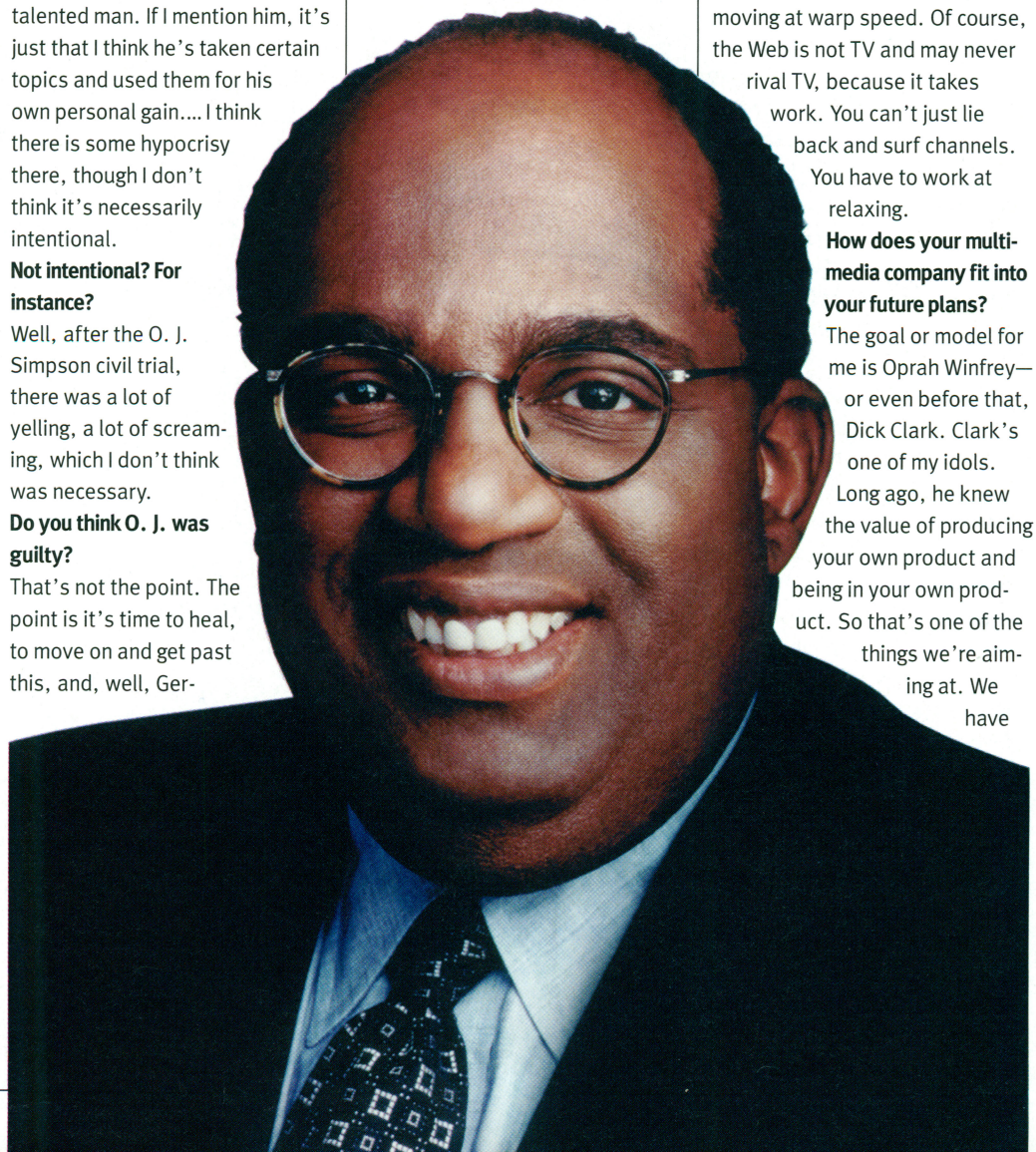
I think the Internet's the last form of democracy. Roker.com is on the same wavelength as Time Warner or NBC. Obviously they've got a lot more firepower and a lot more resources than me, and on that end I'm not equal. But anybody can click on my sight just as easily as they do on Microsoft's site. And that's pretty terrific. It's like having your own TV station with a million other stations.

How would you compare TV and the Web?

The Web today is like television back in the '50s. But the development of television took 20 to 30 years, while this technology is moving at warp speed. Of course, the Web is not TV and may never rival TV, because it takes work. You can't just lie back and surf channels. You have to work at relaxing.

How does your multimedia company fit into your future plans?

The goal or model for me is Oprah Winfrey—or even before that, Dick Clark. Clark's one of my idols. Long ago, he knew the value of producing your own product and being in your own product. So that's one of the things we're aiming at. We have



one PBS series, we're working on another, and we're in the genesis of a kid's weather CD-ROM. By the way, I'm not doing this to have a massive far-flung Internet and video broadcasting empire. It just seems to keep coming. From this comes this, and that comes that, and all of sudden you have four computers, and one at home, and by golly...

How will that affect roker.com?

We'd like to incorporate video into this. I'm fascinated by video downstreaming. We're toying with the idea of doing interviews with people, some long form interviews, and then editing them to have a different portion of that interview on every day.

How Web savvy are you? Did you design your own Web page? Do you actually code in HTML?

A yes to all of that. A company called Creation Ware did help me find the software suites to design the pages. But I'm a lifetime do-it-yourselfer. I take things apart, so I'll know how to put them together. Plus, way back in college I majored in graphics, so Web design just naturally interests me.

Do you have any funny Web stories?

There's a guy on America Online who uses Al Roker as his [alias]. He sent one of my compatriots, Len Berman at NBC, an e-mail message, and Len thought it was me. It was talking about Deborah, personal things, and it was like, Whoa, what are you talking about? So I messaged the guy, and he said, "Well, I just did it as a form of compliment." You know, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery? And I said, "Hey, wait a minute, fella; you're saying you're me. I'm me."

We don't want the Web to be too democratic, huh?

Right. I'm me, you're you. Don't be me. ■

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TV/RADIO Sites | BY DERK RICHARDSON

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: SEEING EAR THEATRE

NEW One of the oldest of old media gets a face lift: The Sci-Fi Channel brings together old-time radio drama, comic book art, and the multimedia capacity of the Web, with a set of Space Age ear candy. You get old radio classics like 1944's "Donovan's Brain" (starring Orson Welles), new productions such as "Into the Sun" (narrated by none other than Mark Hamill), and adaptations of stories by Wells, Poe, and Kafka.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 5 OVERALL 5



www.scifi.com/pulp/set

ACTORS

BEWITCHED AND ELIZABETH MONTGOMERY SITE
www.erols.com/bewitchd

NEW Twitch your nose and click your mouse through this tribute to TV's most beloved witch. You can flip through plans of the house Samantha "haunted"



at 1164 Morning Glory Circle, in Westport, Connecticut, or download audio clips of Elizabeth Montgomery at the peak of her mid-'60s stardom doing Clairol and Chevy Nova commercials and singing a duet with Vic Damone of (what else?) "Bewitched, Bothered & Bewildered." The page's quirky content largely compensates for its unappetizingly fawning tone.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

THE OFFICIAL BOB NEWHART PAGE
www.mindspring.com/~i20west/bob.htm

Long before Jerry Seinfeld came up with a hit show about nothing, there was Bob Newhart. This buttoned-down stand-up comedian replicated the same bland, middle-brow persona on three separate, (mostly) successful TV sitcoms (as psychiatrist Dr. Robert Hartley on *The Bob Newhart Show*, as innkeeper/author Dick Loudon on *Newhart*, and as comic book artist Bob McKay on *Bob*). Everything Bob is here, including bulletins about his concerts, his recordings, and his impending sitcom comeback.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

IN MEMORY OF PATRICK L. PAULSEN
www.paulsen.com

NEW A tender obituary page for perennial presidential parodist Pat Paulsen, who died earlier this year at the age of 69. These days, the site is dominated by announcements of his death, an appeal for funds to help defray his family's medical bills, and a whole page of Paulsen collectibles for sale. You'll also find links to the Paulsen for President campaign's online headquarters (motto: "If elected, I will win!").

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

TV/VIDEO RESOURCES

CLICK TV
www.clicktv.com

NEW Too lazy to channel surf? Surf Click TV for a quick, convenient way to find out what's on the tube tonight in each of more than 100 U.S. cities. You set the parameters for which channels and time slots you're interested in, and Click TV will remember these the next time you log on. The *TV Guide*–like feature stories, business scoops, astrology, crossword puzzle, soap digests, and quips from comic Argus Hamilton are suitable for hard-baked couch potatoes only.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

THE TV ADDICTION NETWORK
home.earthlink.net/~rainey/tvaddict/frontdoor.html

NEW Can you sing the theme song to *Maude*? Ever skipped school or work to watch *Days of Our Lives*? (And, no, we don't care whether your VCR was broken.) If you answered yes to either question, you need help—and here's where to start. Get control of your life (even if only remotely) through a sensible 12-step program that includes renouncing Aaron Spelling as your Higher Power. Of course, you can indulge yourself here, too, with gossip, chats, and an e-mail directory of your favorite stars.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

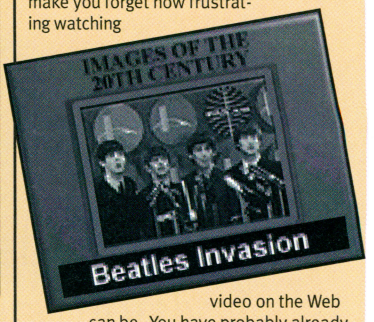
WEBOVISION
www.webovision.com

Neither the missing link between your computer and your television nor an Internet mutation of 3-D glasses, WebOvision is yet another exhaustive compendium of "Media links around the world." Who needs it? Anybody who wants to keep up to date on nearly 3,000 TV, radio, and print publication sites. Admittedly, WebOvision spreads itself so thin that it may miss a few important destinations; but for locations outside the U.S. (Latvia! Wales!), it serves as an indispensable easy-to-use bookmark.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

IMAGES OF THE 20TH CENTURY
www.20thcentury.com/images

NEW The tantalizing glimpses of pop culture and historical content stored in this video vault area are almost enough to make you forget how frustrating watching



video on the Web can be. You have probably already seen many of these nostalgic Hollywood, news, sports, fashion and science clips—Bogie selling bonds, Elvis leaving the Army, Babe Ruth swinging a golf club—elsewhere, but fans won't mind seeing them again. Too bad there aren't more clips.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THEANTENNA
www.theAntenna.com

NEW An industry-oriented service for media folk who work at the intersection of TV and the Web, theAntenna reviews and ranks TV stations on the quality of their Web presence. Aimed at aspiring Webmasters, the site's got a certain David-vs.-Goliath, can-do mentality you gotta love. Though it's extremely light on graphics, theAntenna lists job ops and beams how-to suggestions, interviews, and articles about advertising, content presentation, and more.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 5 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

RADIO RESOURCES

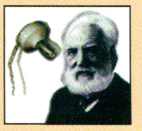
R&R
www.rronline.com

NEW Just how fast is the radio business changing? Visit "the industry's newspaper" to witness a daily feeding frenzy of corporations gobbling up station after station. Eavesdrop on debates about alcohol advertising, troll for jobs, or subscribe (it's not cheap) and get the latest Arbitrons and AccuRatings. The content may appeal to an, er, limited frequency of visitor, but R&R provides a thorough, insider's glimpse at what really drives the commercial airwaves, along with links to numerous stations and radio resources.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

50 YEARS OF THE TRANSISTOR
www.lucent.com/ideas2/heritage/transistor

NEW It's been 50 years since scientists and engineers at Bell Labs (now part of Lucent Technologies) built the tiny semiconductor that brought the Dodgers game to that radio in your shirt pocket. This sharply designed site celebrates the golden



anniversary, offering thumbnail histories of the crystal sets, amplification, vacuum tubes, silicon, and integrated circuits that mark the evolution from transistorized radio to PC.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

440 INTERNATIONAL

www.440int.com

More links than Oscar Meyer has pinched off. 440 International is a clearinghouse of resources for radio broadcasters and dedicated listeners, featuring sections such as Where Are They Now? (which tracks the whereabouts of classic radio jocks), Those Were the Days (links to various this-day-in-history calendars), and Favorite Radio Stories that feed fan interest. You'll be hard pressed to find a radio station that isn't listed here. Job listings, bulletins, and nuts-and-bolts tips serve the workaday industry types who mouth off for a living.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

ONTHEAIR.COM

www.ontheair.com

Geography and wattage be damned. Now that tuning into a radio station is no longer limited by the range of its transmitter, you can punch up nearly 300 Netcasting stations of every ilk—country, rock, oldies, college, jazz, news, urban, Christian—and hear what folks are listening to from Ashtabula to Bordeaux, from Halifax to Sydney. Of course, you might have the pleasure of hearing the odd local-interest commercial shout slogans through your speakers, too.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

RADIO ONLINE

www.radio-online.com

It'll set you back between $7 and $35 per month, depending on the level of service you want; but if you're an industry pro, your dollars will unlock huge resource libraries. You'll find programming, marketing, and promotional resources; job and talent listings; software; radio business news; format changes; FCC news; engineering tips; and ratings. Freeloaders can browse the wealth of radio station and personality pages, from Newfoundland to the Mancow Morning Madhouse.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

OLD RADIO DIGITAL WORLD

www.ndirect.co.uk/~e.tedeschi

NEW Though he sets aside some space to promote his own books and résumé, old-time radio nut Enrico Tedeschi devotes far more of his online resources to a minimally gewgawed and maximally useful set of pages devoted to vintage audio. Buy/sell/trade listings, a calendar of meetings and events slated for localities around the world, lists of clubs, and book and periodical guides are among the handy offerings. Proof that radio doesn't begin and end with Marconi.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

NETWORKS

MSBET

www.betnetworks.com

Where can you see pay-per-view action flicks, WWF wrestling broadcasts, readings by Maya Angelou, news on contemporary jazz, and the hottest acts in hip hop? At the Black Entertainment Network site, which delivers all this with an African-American twist. The print edition might already be stuck in the pages of your local newspaper, but it's more fun to log on for BET chats, live town meetings, and a healthy dose of celebrity-gazing.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

CINET RADIO

www.news.com/Radio

While you lazily surf through sites, the world of the Web is rapidly changing all around you. CINet Radio, anchored by broadcast vet Brian Cooley, is one of the best ways to keep up. Breaking news stories about Net-related business and technology are filed every 30 to 90 minutes. Pick up on-the-spot coverage through your RealAudio player, search the archive of recent stories, or jump to CINet's nonaudio news, all delivered in a no-nonsense, economical format.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

BBC RADIO 4 ONLINE

www.bbc.co.uk/radio4

NEW Imagine NPR with John Cleese on the programming committee, and you get an idea of what the BBC's Radio 4 has been up to for the past few decades. Though science, news, and drama are all represented here—and news cybercasts are in the offing—the comedy pages are the biggest draw, from the Guess the Bar Code quiz on "I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue," to such innovative programming as "Hancock's Half Hour" and "Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy." Prick up your ears, laddie.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

TV SHOWS

ABCNEWS.COM

www.abcnews.com

NEW Why wait 'til you're home from work for your 30 minutes of sound-bite TV news, when you can get streaming news online? ABCNews.com, like many other news sites, offers news flashes up front.



But it also lets you pick subject areas (politics, business, science and technology, weather, etc.) and choose between highlights and "in depth" stories. Unless you're a diehard Peter Jennings fan, it sure beats sitting through two-minute blocks of commercials over dinner.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

www.cryptnet.com

The irrepressibly punning Cryptkeeper has exhumed enough back issues to please a ghoul. TV's most hellacious host gives a cackling RealAudio introduction to the Screaming Room, the Graveyard, and the Laboratory, where you'll find 47 years of *Tales From the Crypt* comic books, television, and movie history. Java-animated spiders, fire, and video trailers for Cryptic films enliven this multifaceted house of horrors. It's easy to get lost, but isn't that the point, kiddies?

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

POLYESTER TELEVISION

www.gidd.com/polyester/polytv.htm

Don those hip-huggin' corduroy bellbottoms and take a trashy tour of the far-out TV fare of the '70s. *The Love Boat*, *Happy Days*, *The Partridge Family*, *Welcome Back Kotter*, *The Bionic Woman*, and *Charlie's Angels* are all here. Fans will be jumping around as quickly as their leisure suits allow to the scores of pages dedicated to such immortal entertainments as *The Monkees* and *Mork and Mindy*. A wrinkle-free ride through the Me Decade.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4



ELLEN

www.tvplex.com/Touchstone/Ellen

NEW If the frenzied media build-up to "the episode" and the blurred lines between her real life and her character's sexual identity travail didn't give you Ellen indigestion, snoop through her Shockwaved apartment and bookstore. You'll find the usual official photos and biographies, and a sampling of video clips from the world's most celebrated coming out party. Just be sure your plug-ins are in order, so everything "comes out" right.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

THE OUTER LIMITS

www.theouterlimits.com

NEW If only The Outer Limits' Webmasters had invested as much creative energy into the content as they put into the techno-gothic graphics and effects. Like the classic sci-fi/mystery series and its current revival, this site purports to take control of your monitor, causing the title to emerge from a field of static and making words and icons wobble and



move. But the episode synopses, stills, video clips, and trivia contest are routine corporate teasers; and escape is always just a click away.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

NASH BRIDGES HOME PAGE

www.thenetshow.com/nash

NEW If the script for Don Johnson's prime-time return were as lame as the monolog Nash utters online as he shows you around his apartment, his car (the "'Cuda"), and—of course—his merchandise, the former *Miami Vice* star would already be looking for work again. The interactive "Webisode" is like a "Dick and Jane" reader with mature content, and the jive Nash spouts about his city's fog and hip urban dwellers is enough to make those hipsters pull up stakes and move back to Poughkeepsie.

CONTENT 1 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 1

RADIO SHOWS

FRESH AIR

www.whyy.org/freshair

NEW *Fresh Air* lives up to its name. NPR goddess Terry Gross's engrossing interviews and John Powers' wry film crit, plus astute book and music reviews, make it a consistently top-notch arts program. Here you can catch selected shows, read transcript excerpts of the "interview of the month," download the musical theme and Gross's breathy introduction, and finally learn how to spell Marty Moss-Coane and David Bianculli.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

STATION 2000

www.station2000.com

NEW Hosted by '70s-era radio vets Jim Ladd, Sheila Renee, and Raechel Donahue (widow of San Francisco underground pioneer Tom Donahue), Station-2000 features original programming that attempts to bring the spirit of free-form rock jocking to the Web. Equipped with RealAudio's latest RealPlayer, you can visit other sites while you listen. Archived concerts by rockers ranging from Carl Perkins to Styx, will have you flicking the lighter at your monitor.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

SOAPS

PORT CHARLES ONLINE

www.port-charles.com

NEW Soap opera fans are fanatics, so it's not surprising that one of the best conceived and most meticulously maintained amateur TV sites is dedicated to *General Hospital* (and its new ABC spin-off, *Port Charles*). Whether you want history (*GH* has been running since 1963), daily updates, episode summaries and spoilers, chat room gossip, satirical Top Ten Lists, actor bios, fan club info, or links to much of the soaped-up world, check yourself in here.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

SOAP LINKS

members.aol.com/soaplinks



NEW Conceived by the same lathered-up brain that lurks behind Port Charles Online, this sudsy one-stop not only highlights the best of the fan-operated homepages for 14 major daytime and evening soaps, but also links to scores of other sites related to the shows, the actors, the networks, the Daytime Emmys, and more. It may take a month on TV for a soap plot line to inch forward, but it'll take you at least twice that long to check out all the resources listed here.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 5 OVERALL 4

BY MARY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

Crazy for Crystals

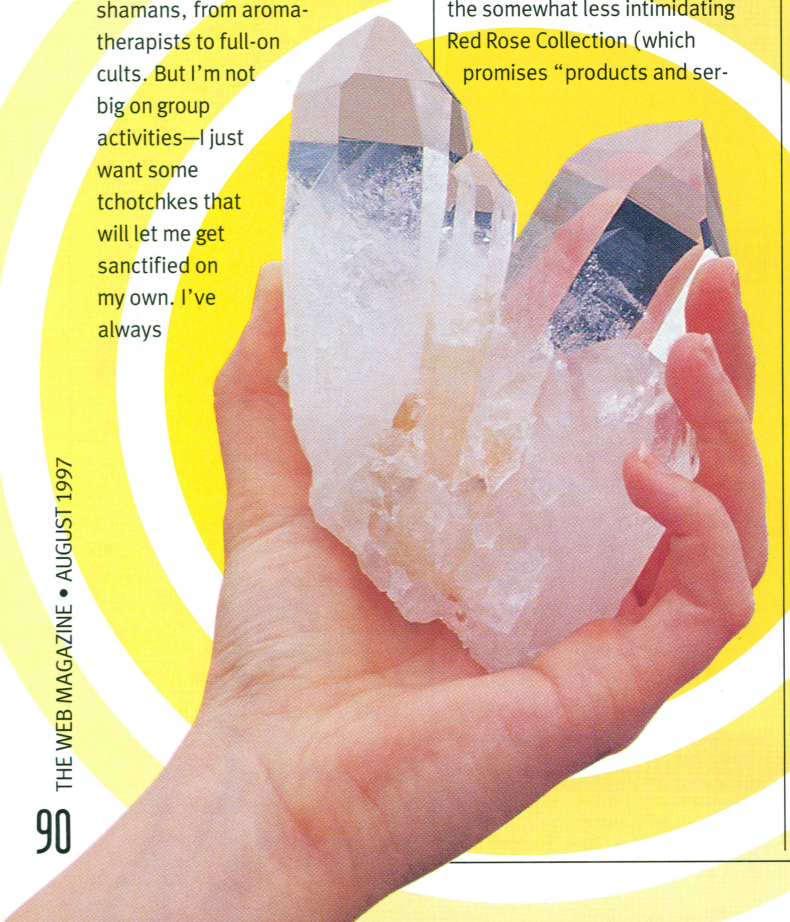
Where to shop for your New Age knickknacks on the Net

MAYBE I'M COMING down with millennium fever. Maybe my inner child is waking up from inner recess and wants some carob cookies. Maybe I spent too many years in California. Whatever the reason, lately I've been thinking about getting my chakras aligned, my aura brightened, and my chi refreshed. But I am first and foremost an East Coast–bred, Type A–personality, modern gal, so I want it all pronto. In short, I need instant karma. And if I have to buy it, so be it.

The Web, as you may have noticed, cannot be accused of having a deficiency of sites that display a spiritual bent. Some of these are sponsored by religious and New Age organizations, running the gamut from Wiccans to shamans, from aromatherapists to full-on cults. But I'm not big on group activities—I just want some tchotchkes that will let me get sanctified on my own. I've always considered shopping a spiritual experience anyway.

I decide to embark on my retail therapy at the New Age Mall—a virtual version of my local shopping center, only without the Gap and the Mrs. Fields. The paucity of links to actual merchandise harshes my mellow a bit, but the site seems a decent starting point for a novice New Ager like me.

NAM supplies links aplenty to information on ordering books, audiotapes, and videos, but I'm not in the market for words of wisdom. I want things, damnit. When I turn to the catalog section, I find the place pretty bare-bones, offering only links to Alphasonics Tools for Growth (a series of subliminal tapes that trigger "Neurosonic Mind Attunement™") and the somewhat less intimidating Red Rose Collection (which promises "products and services to help individuals develop a healthy body, an open mind, and a sense of spirituality and joy in their lives"). Now if they can just guarantee low, low prices and delivery within five business days.



After clicking through advice on how to keep a dream journal and studying a few Feng Shui decorating tips, I find the Mall's shopping area. It soon becomes apparent that this might not be the hardest-core New Age merchandise mart ever. I find the SuperAsanaT Meditation Cushion promising—more comfortable chanting = quicker bliss—but I remain skeptical about what the "Angel Pig with Joy Stone" will do to improve my quality of life. The pug-nosed cherub does come bearing rose quartz, though, which the Crystals of the World page calls good for "awakening the energy of the heart." Is $30 too much to pay for an awakening of my heart energy *and* a celestial oinker? Frankly, I have no idea, unfamiliar as I am with the going rate for such relics.

But the piggy gets me thinking. Since I love bibelots, my best New Age bet is a mystic jewelry drawer full of crystals and amulets. With that new path in mind, I mosey over to Lytha Studios. Lytha puts a Wiccan spin on traditional retail. Whereas department stores have President's Day sales, here you're more likely to find specials on Celtic and pentacle jewelry during Beltane. Lytha offers a plethora of adornments—goddess jewelry, Indian clapperless-bell jewelry, crystals, amulets, and parrot jewelry. Parrot jewelry? Lytha's proprietor and craftswoman Erin Weik explains, "My interest in nature, parrots, and my own practice of symbolic Wicca has given me much inspiration when beading."

AURA ACTION

Lytha's baubles are beautiful, without a doubt; but they seem to be more symbol than power tool, and I want my vehicle to nirvana turbo-charged. Not until I reach the 007-sounding Action Agency do I know my psyche is in for a brisk workout. Here I find the "Psychic Stones Meditation Necklace." It looks a tad hippyish for my taste, but I like the creator's promise that "We are trademarking the high energy process used to raise and retain the vibration level of the stones at universal pure energy." She goes on to explain that, "During meditation, the high rate of pure energy vibration enables the wearer (or holder) to rapidly attain the Alpha state." The fast track to Alpha state—now we're getting somewhere. And at a low, low price of $15, Alpha's never been so affordable!

Though I've come for a quick hit of high energy, I'm intrigued by other goodies the site offers, including a heavenly choir's worth of crystal angel pendants in such forms as the "Crystal Tongue" (which, unfortunately, looks the way it sounds). Action Agency also offers Waterfall Lamps and Volcano Waterfall Lamps—mushroom-shaped luminous spew forms that "really catch the eye." I'm not quite sure how they're supposed to benefit my soul, but they double as swell humidifiers. I may still struggle for enlightenment, but at least I'll be moist.

As I continue my quest, chance or fate or the goddess leads me to the Awareness Institute. The first things the AI folks tempt me with

are items they call ear candles. These 10-inch-long, cornet-like devices are made of unbleached cotton and triple-dipped wax. Upon further investigation, I learn that ear candles have been used since ancient days as a homeopathic colonic for the ear canal. What's more, the institute offers certification in earconologist studies; and I could "earn a very good living by performing Ear-Candling service" in my community. I imagine myself making a house call with blazing Q-Tips protruding from each ear, and somehow it just doesn't seem like the right vocation for me.

I have to accept that I'm not ready for complex, high-impact remedies. I'd rather shop than meditate; my idea of a religious experience is finding Donna Karan on the sale rack at Loehmann's. I need to find a site that's more tailored to my retail-loving soul, so I drag my sorry earthbound ass to the Ventana site, where I can get heaping helpings of New Age delights in easy-to-swallow packages. This is definitely not the domain of heavy-duty herbs or baffling ear torches. Instead, Ventana is the home of angel lotion dispensers and magnetic poetry kits. It's New Age Lite. Which, until they create an Instant Illuminati blend at Starbucks, is about as far as I want to go.

THE SITES

NEW AGE MALL
www.newagemall.com
RED ROSE GARDEN
www.redrose.com
CRYSTALS OF THE WORLD
www.magna.com.au/~cryswrld/index.htm
LYTHA STUDIOS
uran.net/lytha/beads
ACTION AGENCY
home.earthlink.net/~actionagency
AWARENESS INSTITUTE'S EAR CANDLES
www.awarinst.com/prod03.htm
VENTANA
www.ventana-catalog.com

Mary Elizabeth Williams *hosts Table Talk at Salon (www.salon1999.com). She has written for* The Nation, *Bust,* Wired, *geekgirl, and* bOING bOING. *Send e-mail comments to postings@webmagazine.com.*

WEIRD Sites

BY MARY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

RATINGS GUIDE: 5 Bookmark It 4 Browse It 3 Click It 2 Consider It 1 Skip It

EDITOR'S CHOICE: DERMATOLOGY IN THE CINEMA

NEW Skinema is the site for those who can't get enough flesh on the big screen—and not the Sharon Stone leg-crossing variety either. Created by a dermatologist with a penchant for celebrity skin disorders, Dermatology in the Cinema examines such filmic devices as "skin conditions used to convey evil" (paging Freddy Krueger) and tackles issues like "Is Hollywood prejudiced against albinos?" and "Should actors with skin conditions be 'outed' for the greater good?" One page discusses the absence on screen of characters with psoriasis, focusing on the lone (TV) exception, Dennis Potter's painfully itchy saga of *The Singing Detective*. Plus moles, lesions, and scars aplenty.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3
LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

www.skinema.com



SHOW BIZ

SIN CITY
www.sincity.com
NEW The official Penn & Teller Web site, Sin City's got news, card tricks, trivia, and more from the men who kick David Copperfield's blow-dried butt. You can meet their official stalkers (who seem much easier to get along with than, say, Mark David Chapman) or explore the 6'-6" colossus that is Penn Jillette on his very own imagemap. Not as much fun as juggling broken glass, but pretty damn close.
CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5

THE DEL RUBIO TRIPLETS WONDERLAND
www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/3331
NEW They aren't the Judds, and they aren't Wilson Phillips: They're a family act unlike any other. This perky, guitar-playing combo's homepage on the range features biographical information, photos (is that



Ellen DeGeneres the ladies are cozying up to?), live chat, a *Triplet Times* newsletter (though the recent death of Eadie renders the name sadly inaccurate), and the biggest, blondest hair outside Opryland.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

THE I HATE JOEY LAWRENCE AND HIS BIG SQUEAKY VOICE PAGE
www.fl.net.au/~parasail/joeyhate.htm
NEW Poor Joey—the Lawrence brother whose hair settled into position in the '80s and stayed there. The IHJL&HBSVP lets you peruse poetry splotched with masterful couplets like "Death to Joey/ And that Whoay," gape at an ambitiously Photoshopped image, and generally vent on all that rankles about the former *Blossom* star. Best of all is the page of e-mail from furious Joey lovers—"You must be crazy to think Joey Lawrence is a big ugly Parachute head!!"
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

LOSERS

PHONE LOSERS OF AMERICA
www.bright.net/~bac/pla
Welcome to the touch-tone netherworld. PLA rings merrily with pranks, games, and the kind of general mayhem that blisters as it tickles. Find out "How to Turn the Work Life of a Local 7-Eleven Employee into a Living Hell," including "Proven ways to get yourself shot." Plus, numbers to call when you're really bored, fun with call forwarding, and waffle house torture. Brilliant.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

THE KOOK OF THE MONTH
www.wetware.com/mlegare/kotm
NEW Honoring the "true nutburgers of the net," KotM proves there's no shortage of wackjobs with online access. The latest, most exhaustive version of this perennial Web favorite spreads the wealth across special categories such as Clueless Newbie of the Month and The Victor Von Frankenstein "Wierd Science" award—"for ideas So Crazy They Just Might Work." Frightening, but hilarious.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

THE WEDGIE PAGE
pages.prodigy.com/Hell/walter/wedgie.html
Proof that America's crack problem isn't going away any time soon. The Wedgie Page is low on graphics (some things are better left to the imagination) but astonishingly research-intensive. The top draw here is a history of wedgies, with full descriptions of various jock-pulling methods, all written in glorious, poorly spelled prose: "Philip of Macedon encooraged his son after a creul wedgie at school." Be sure to read up on wedgie technique, which establishes beyond question that it really is all in the wrist.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 1 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

MIDI ORGANIST WRITES ABOUT HIS LIFE & OTHERS TOO!
www.aristotle.net/~crazymidiman
NEW Perhaps the only page on the Web dedicated to the rantings of a southern electronic musician/church organist who has a bone to pick with his local parish. The self-proclaimed Crazymidiman makes his case with judicious use of blinking text, capital letters, and a mess of exclamation points. Read his plans to clone himself and create a powerful army of MIDI players! See him mock those who will be left out in the cold during the great MIDI revolution! You have been warned!
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

ZINES

HITCH!
www.ionet.net/~twilken/HITCH
NEW Defining itself as a journal of pop culture absurdity, Hitch is refreshingly frivolous—the kind of magazine that knows how to laugh at itself while busily mocking others. Recent issues have featured the Tweed-o-matic (an interactive tool that helps you create your own direct-to-video erotic thriller), an in-depth interview with Barry Williams (a.k.a. Greg Brady), and a highly amusing spoof by Hitch's Wichita Bureau chief, Ken Davis, of a Lamaze class gone wrong.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

WACKY.COM
www.wacky.com
While there's something faintly annoying about a site that has the effrontery to appropriate an adjective traditionally associated with rubber chickens and *Mad* magazine, Wacky.Com does offer a few chuckles. A "Bill Gates and Me" tally estimates the Microsoft poohbah's worth in trillions of dollars against the Wacky.Com CEO's rolls of nickels, and a Tantalis section allows you to press a button and pretend to virtually annihilate an enemy. Pleasant, in a mildly wacky way.
CONTENT 3 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

BLOW MY COLON
www.themall.net/~bmczines
Not the most subtly named site you'll come across, but whatever Blow My Colon lacks in nuance it makes up for in sheer snark. Articles titled "Why I Hate the Y," "Get Out of My Way," and "Child Stars Gone Bad... Real Bad!" telegraph the mood here. Not a lot of fancy visuals, but any zine that can use the phrases "Olsen twins" and "crack whores" in the same sentence has much to recommend it.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

THE LAND OF SCHLOCK
www-leland.stanford.edu/~schlock
Schlock, as in "cheap and trashy." And schlock, as in page creator Michaela Schlocker. Michaela is a woman willing to share her oddball obsessions (or at least abundant links to same) with the world. She's posted a definitive list of references to the number 47 in the *Star Trek* universe, a copy of the *Homicide: Life on the Street* drinking game, and proposals for hot new TV shows like *Hangin' in the Hall* and *Driving Michaela*. A revealing glimpse at what a Stanford education gets you these days. Chelsea, take note.
CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 3 OVERALL 3

DANGEROUS FRIENDS

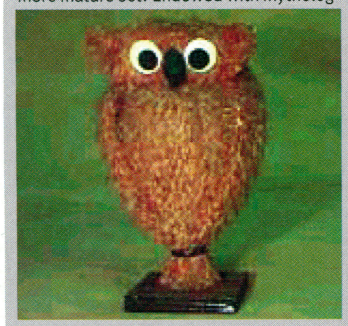
BERT IS EVIL!
fractalcow.com/bert

Bert? Ernie's pal? The felt-covered, stripe-shirted, little yellow man with the biggest monobrow outside the Frieda Kahlo Portrait Gallery? Evil? It's true. This evidence file posts e-mails exchanged between Bert and Jeffrey Dahmer, the shocking story of how Bert took out Mr. Hooper, interviews with fellow Muppets, mugshots, and clippings from Bert's FBI dossier. More shocking than a hair dryer in the bath, the Bert Is Evil! page suggests that the way to Sesame Street is the highway to hell.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 5

MINGEI: JAPANESE FOLK TOYS
www.calacademy.org/research/anthropology/japanese

NEW Hello Kitty and tamagotchi be damned! Mingei are toys for Japan's more mature set. Endowed with mythological/religious powers, Mingei have been used for centuries to ward off evil spirits, bring good fortune, or protect a rightful owner. Each animal here tells a story from Japanese folklore, like the pampas grass horned owl, which "is generally regarded in Japan as malicious or at best useless, [but] this particular toy is widely recognized for its benevolence." What a hoot.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 3

DEATH

THE LEE ATWATER INVITATIONAL DEAD POOL
home.earthlink.net/~ghicks

NEW Yeltsin or Sinatra? Mother Teresa or Drew Barrymore? Lay your odds on which celebrities are nearer than others to their makers at this easy-to-play-along-at-home drama of death. A "sickticker" scrolls across the bottom of the page, giving you the latest on who's in intensive care, who's home from the hospital, and who's turned up at Forest Lawn. Morbid, cruel, and quite well done.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

ROADSIDE AMERICA PET CEMETERY
www.roadsideamerica.com/pet

NEW The big scratching post in the sky—or at least in cyberspace. Highlighting pet monuments nationwide, Roadside pays tribute to those faithful animal companions who have buried their last bones and humped their last legs. They're all here—from celebrity husky bronzes in Central Park to memorials to the humblest mutts, from the elephant graveyard to the final repose of Herman the Mouse. Far more dignified than a Tidybowl burial or a shoebox sunk in the backyard.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

DINAIR'S MORTUARY MAKEUP
www.dinair.com/dinair/morty.html

Just because you're no longer breathing, that's no excuse to let your looks go. Dinair's unique spray-on coverage guarantees a healthy, I'm-still-breathing glow—indefinitely. What's more, it's "durable and touchable and will not rub off on loved ones or clothes." Dinair's page features photos of makeup artists plying their trade on customers who never have to be told to stay still (or to keep a stiff upper lip), plus information on their "hands on" makeup classes. Make this your ultimate destination for the look that leaves them saying "Death becomes her."

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

PRODUCTS

THE OFFICIAL MOON PIE HOME PAGE
www.moonpie.com

You can keep your Ho-Ho's, insulin boy. For pure sugary junk food satisfaction, Moon Pies are the originator and the innovator. This playfully designed home of the "official cybersnack of the 21st century" has splendid Moon Pie recipes, a history of the company, and even a peek at the plant to see how Moon Pies are made (employing words like "lovingly" and "magically" with evident sincerity). As sweet as a big vat of marshmallow creme.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

THE SLIGHTLY LESS THAN OFFICIAL SPORK PAGE
www.spork.org

It's more than a fork but it's not quite a spoon, and the KFC bucket of slaw wouldn't be the same without it. Recognizing that the spork is "so much more than just a poor excuse for an eating utensil," this site's creators have fashioned an entire philosophy around the tiny fast-food tool. You'll be apprised of spork sightings from around the world, as well as alternative uses for the spork (and its close cousin, the foon). A sentimental encomium for the world's most neglected eating utensil.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 2 OVERALL 4

HEADBALL
www.ragingheadcheese.com/headball.htm

Working for The Man got you down? Have your eyes on an Uzi? Then it's time for Headball. For a mere 20 clams and a non-returnable photo of your most loathed acquaintance, you can get a noggin-sized squishy of the person you'd most like to punch, hammer, step on, and let the dog bury in the yard. The Headball site is full of delightful demos of the product enduring various indignities, and (as the makers point out) "Who ever has to know but you and your closed fist?"

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

THINGS THAT GO CRAMP

MUSEUM OF MENSTRUATION
www.mum.org

NEW Putting the period back in Web periodicals, MUM promises a glimpse into "the rich history of menstruation." Included are photos of antique knitted pads (which resemble kicky little purses), sample excerpts from early educational pamphlets on becoming a woman, and ads for those old toxic shock–inducing Rely tampons. With so much practical information and nostalgic trivia, the museum makes the monthly visit from Aunt Flo seem like a historical event.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 5



OLEAN
www.olean.com/home.html

NEW Isn't this the stuff that causes, um, leakage? Down there? Yet to look at this versatile lard substitute's official corporate site, you'd think it was as healthful and all-American as apple pie. See how happy that little girl looks as she's served up a big plate of faux fat! The suits provide little explanation of the actual product, except to note that it "starts with the familiar goodness of soybean and cottonseed." Mmm-mmm. Check out the recipes page: It's fat-astic.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 3 LINKS 4 OVERALL 3

NOSTALGIA

BURMA SHAVE SLOGANS
www.iea.com/~dgookin/burma.htm

NEW The signs once appeared/on roads far and near/Now they've all disappeared/except for right here/Burma Shave! This site is just text/no pictures, no sex/but it's fun just the same/to stroll down memory lane/Burma Shave! Imagine yourself in a Chevy convertible, whizzing past a series of poster-size red placards (with white lettering) on sticks. That was the Burma Shave experience, which you can relive in this quaint collection of ad copy from 1927 through 1963. It must have been a close shave indeed that inspired this site's satisfied customer.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

BOZO RUINED MY LIFE
www.rust.net/~torby/JAN97/features/bozo/bozo.html

NEW Harrowing testimony from young Americans with one thing in common: childhood traumas suffered at the hands of America's most famous clown. The Bozo site recounts television show humiliations and abrupt encounters with the crying-on-the-inside entertainer. "Now I feel like I'm chasing a clown pipe dream" says one man so scarred he actually grew up to be a clown himself. Tragic in itself, it includes Bozo background info and a Bozo timeline, for extra context.



CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

TRAVEL

LICENSE PLATES OF THE WORLD
danshiki.oit.gatech.edu/~iadt3mk

From Africa to the Yukon, it's a trip around the globe by way of the rear fender. If you've ever wondered what the license plates of Micronesia look like, or if you've spent the last 20 years longing to relive the patriotic fervor of bicentennial logos, your sleepless nights are over. And if the idea of hanging out online gawking at license plates seems too geeky, look instead at the information on License Plate conventions. Is it true that Ohio's state motto is "Seatbelts Fastened?"

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 3 LINKS 3 OVERALL 4

THE MONASTERY OF CHRIST IN THE DESERT
www.christdesert.org

NEW In the dark ages, monks gave us illuminated manuscripts. Today, they design Web pages. Let your virtual guide,



"Brother URL," show you around the monastery's colorful-as-the-Book-of-Kells site. An "e-mail your prayer" option and gearhead talk about the site's "metamorphosizing" features make it clear that monastic attention to detail hasn't gone the way of the quill. Beautifully done, and with a cheekiness not often found in guys who have to wear brown every day.

CONTENT 5 DESIGN 5 LINKS 1 OVERALL 4

CURSING IN SWEDISH
www.bart.nl/~sante/curshome.htm

Most of us know a few choice words in Italian or Yiddish, but why not add a little Scandinavian finesse to your blue streak? The Swedish page gives you the chance to say what you really think of Ace of Base—in their native tongue—in just eight easy lessons. Go from mild references to God and the Devil to more colorful phrases about your sister. Remarkably, even the rudest stuff is fairly polite.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 3

THE BURL INN
www.colterbay.com/burlinn/burl.html

NEW Now you have two reasons to visit Cody, Wyoming: the rodeo, and the Burl Inn, where all the furniture is made from genuinely twisted trees! Opening with an image of what appears to be a thorny hunk of animal flesh, the Burl invites tired travelers to rest up a spell in the comforting arms of misshapen lumber. There's even a honeymoon suite, with a burl-hewn double bed, lamps, and wood-free Jacuzzi. Log on.

CONTENT 3 DESIGN 2 LINKS 1 OVERALL 2

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

S-4 DATABASE
www.dsolution.com/s4

NEW Because you can never have enough information about "the true nature of the Extraterrestrial Biological Entities visiting our world." S-4 spills the alien beans with special reports of late-breaking news, interactive chat, and a paranormal number of theories about what really goes on at Area 51—all framed in a futuristic, pentagon-like design scheme. Completely serious. Highly entertaining.

CONTENT 4 DESIGN 4 LINKS 4 OVERALL 4

ZETATALK
www.zetatalk2.com

The times, they are a changin'. And who better to explain millennial fever to us than our friendly alien visitors, the Zetas, and their emissary, the exotically named "Nancy"? Read up on Zeta/human hybrid experiments, government cover-ups, and the role of aliens in everything from the death of Marilyn Monroe to the Oklahoma City bombing. All your favorite conspiracy-kookjob themes come into play here, from Roswell to the Masons. It's everything you've come to love in alien wackos, on one unbelievably huge site.

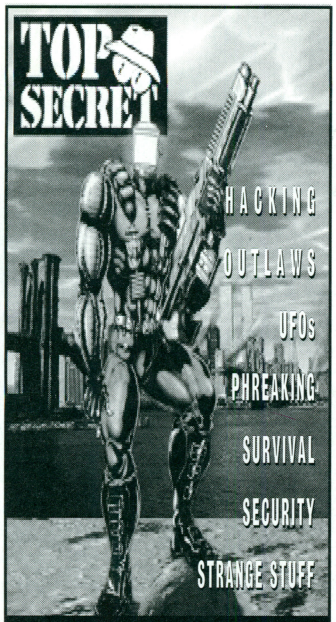
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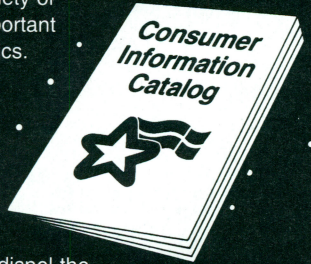
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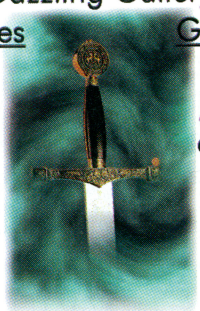
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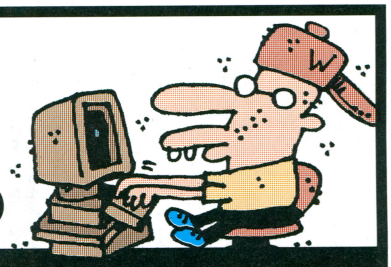
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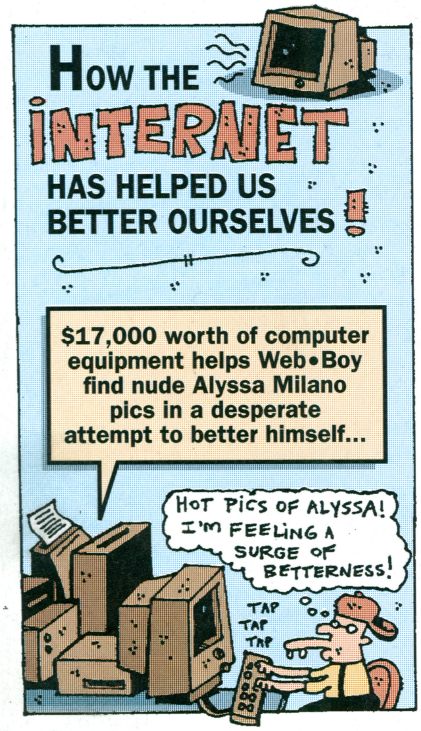
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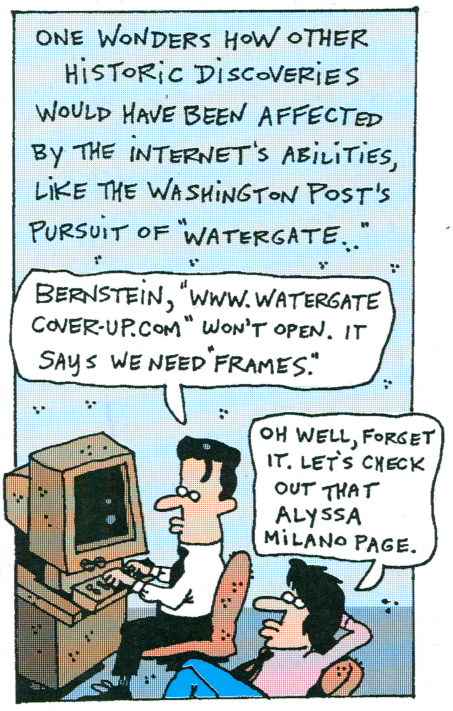
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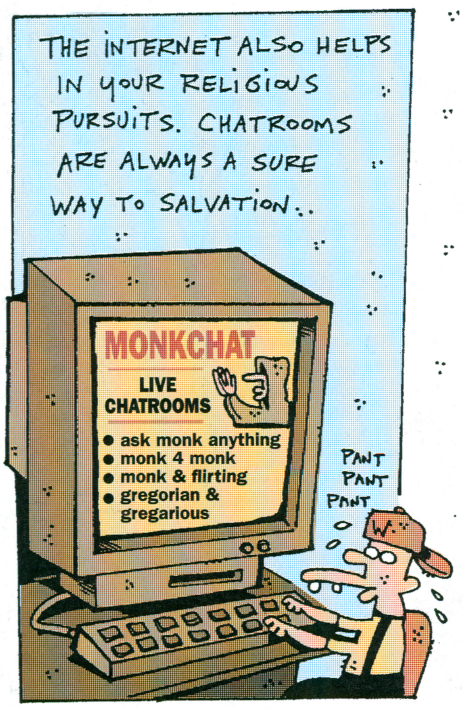


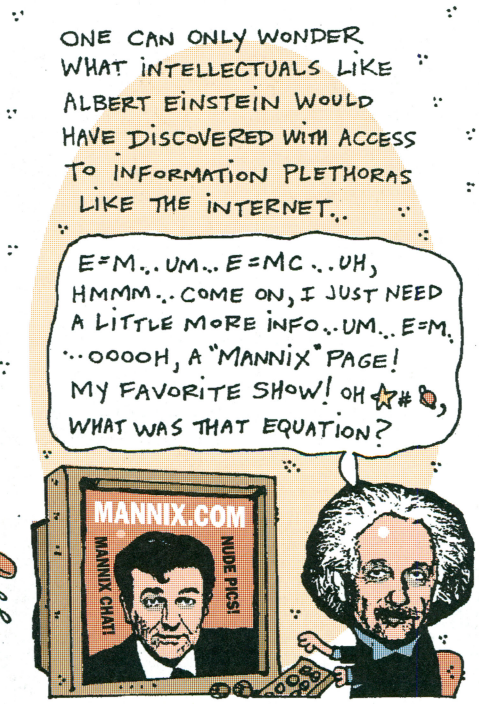
and his search for truth. by don asmussen





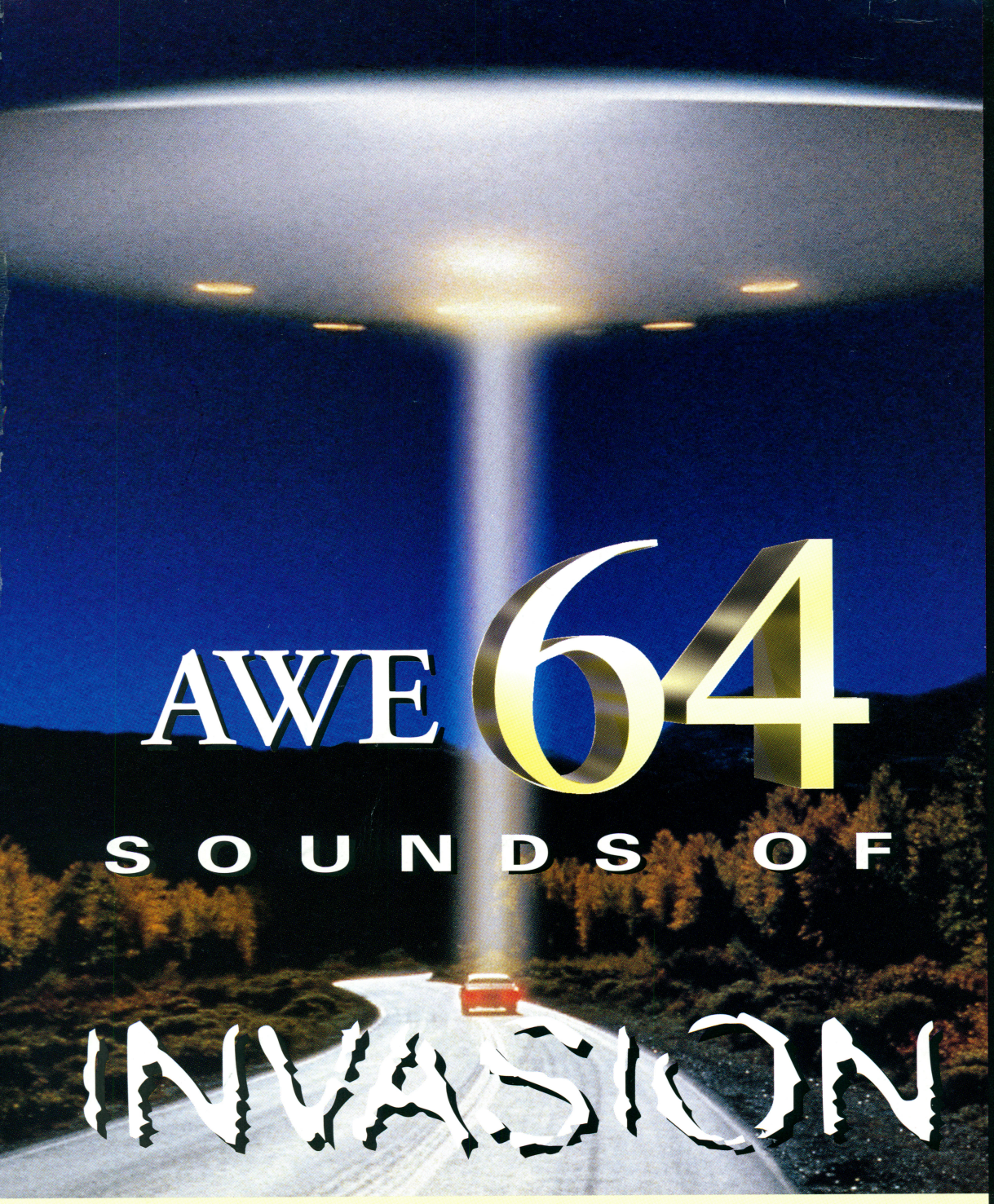








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3. People Screaming.
4. "You Must Believe Me!"
5. Exploding Buildings.
6. Whirring Space Ships.
7. Brains Being Sucked.
8. Bones Crunching.
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63. "Fire at Will!"
64. "Take Me to Your Leader."



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